

**POETRY AND TASMANIAN INSTITUTIONS OF  
LEARNING 1840 – 1950**

**BY**

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14 September 2001

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## **Poetry and Tasmanian Institutions of Learning 1840 – 1950**

### **Abstract**

This thesis examines the teaching of poetry in Tasmanian institutions of learning from 1840 to 1950. It identifies the poetry taught in government primary schools from 1840, the poetry prescribed for secondary public examinations from 1861, and that taught at the university from 1891. It examines the nature of this poetry and methods of its teaching and assessment, and considers changes that occurred in the pedagogical value and function of poetry during this period.

The poetry taught in Tasmania's primary schools during the nineteenth century was included in school readers published in Britain and Ireland. This poetry reflected the religious and moral values of the British and Foreign School Society and the National Commissioners of Ireland, and the ideals of patriotism and imperialism promoted by the British government. The thesis demonstrates the extent to which these values and ideals influenced the selection of poetry, including Australian poetry, for school readers published specifically for Tasmanian primary schools in the first decades of the twentieth century.

The poetry taught and examined at secondary and tertiary levels in Tasmania during the nineteenth century and early decades of the twentieth century conformed to British Public School and University syllabus requirements. The poems studied at these levels were from the classical English canon of poetry, and this canon remained largely unchanged until the 1940s when the University of Tasmania's Department of English initiated its pioneering course in Australian literature.

By analysing courses of study, school inspection reports, and methods of teacher training, the thesis demonstrates that poetry in the primary school served initially as a means of teaching reading, speaking and recitation skills and of inculcating society's values and beliefs. Poetry was not studied as a form of literature to be appreciated and enjoyed until the early twentieth century. This change in the function of poetry challenged both the traditional canons of primary school poetry and the methods of its teaching. Similar developments occurred in senior secondary and university English studies. Initially, poetry was a useful source for the study of grammar, etymology and figurative language, before being valued and studied as a form of literature in its own right.

The thesis considers the extent to which teachers were challenged by classroom methods designed to stimulate and measure students' personal and critical appreciation of poetry during the 1930s and 40s. It examines the tensions between the traditional moral and linguistic approaches to the teaching of poetry and the emerging application of Romantic ideologies that focussed on personal and creative responses to literature, and demonstrates that these tensions were not resolved within the timeframe of the study.

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Photograph of Joyce Eyre.

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Title page of the British and Foreign School Society's *Daily Lesson Book III* 1849.

'Daily Reading Lesson – Monday' from British and Foreign School Society's *Daily Lesson Book III* 1849, pages 8-9.

Title page of the *Third Irish Reading Book* 1878, adapted for the use of schools in Australia, Tasmania and New Zealand.

'Welcome, Little Robin' from the *Royal Readers I*, 26-7.

Photograph of John Andrew Johnson, from the supplement to the *Educational Record* March 1933.

George Essex Evans's 'The Women of the West' from the Tasmanian Education Department's *School Paper* for classes V and VI, July 1909.

J.L. Cuthbertson's 'The Australian Sunrise' from the *Tasmanian Readers Grade VI* 1941, 1.

Archives Office of Tasmania:

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## Abbreviations

<i>ADB</i>	<i>Australian Dictionary of Biography</i>
<i>AOT</i>	<i>Archives Office of Tasmania</i>
<i>AR</i>	<i>Australian School Readers</i>
<i>BE</i>	<i>British Empire Readers</i>
<i>BFSS</i>	<i>British and Foreign School Society</i>
<i>ER</i>	<i>The Educational Record</i>
<i>HME</i>	<i>Handbook of Matriculation Examinations</i>
<i>IR</i>	<i>Irish Readers</i>
<i>JHA</i>	<i>Journals of the House of Assembly</i>
<i>JPE</i>	<i>Junior Public Examination</i>
<i>JPP</i>	<i>Journals and Papers of Parliament</i>
<i>LCP</i>	<i>Legislative Council Papers</i>
<i>MM</i>	<i>Matriculation Manual</i>
<i>NAR</i>	<i>New Australian School Series</i>
<i>PE</i>	<i>Handbook of Public Examinations</i>
<i>PPRST</i>	<i>Papers and Proceedings of the Royal Society of Tasmania</i>
<i>PR</i>	<i>Pacific Readers</i>
<i>RR</i>	<i>Royal Readers</i>
<i>SBM</i>	<i>Schools Board Manual</i>
<i>SBT</i>	<i>Schools Board of Tasmania</i>
<i>SP</i>	<i>School Paper</i>
<i>SPE</i>	<i>Senior Public Examination</i>
<i>SPEM</i>	<i>Senior Public Examination Manual</i>
<i>THRAPP</i>	<i>Tasmanian Historical Research Association, Papers and Proceedings</i>
<i>TSJ</i>	<i>Tasmanian School Journal</i>
<i>UHE</i>	<i>Handbook of University Examination Papers</i>
<i>UTA</i>	<i>Archives of the University of Tasmania</i>

## Illustrations

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### **Note on the text**

Unless acknowledged in the text, all italicised, underlined and highlighted words and passages in the quotations from source material included in this thesis are reproduced from the original documents.

The grammatical, spelling, punctuation or typographical errors and inconsistencies in these original documents are too numerous to be acknowledged individually, without unduly disrupting the text. Accordingly, the various spelling of names, such as 'Shakespeare', and titles of works such as Spenser's *The Fairie Queene* or Whittier's 'Barbara Fritchie' are reproduced as printed in the source from which they are drawn. Similarly, contemporary capitalisation, punctuation, italicisation, and hyphenation practices are reproduced without comment, as are the sometimes obvious errors of possession and tense. Due care has been taken to reproduce extracts from the documents in their original form.

As a general rule, numbers are written as words in expository passages of the text, but as figures in those passages that describe statistical information.

### Bibliographical note

This study examines a sample of the school readers and school papers prescribed for use in Tasmanian primary schools from 1841 to 1950. The nature and extent of the sample was determined, in many instances, by the availability of the texts. Despite the efforts of the University Library Inter-loan service, it proved impossible to obtain copies of the readers for each grade level in all the series of readers, particularly the British and Foreign School Society's *Daily Lesson books*, the *British Empire Readers* and the *School Papers*. It also proved difficult to establish the precise publication date of the copies of some readers that were available, particularly the *Royal Readers* and the *New Australian School Series*.

The titles of the poems listed in the Tables and referred to in the body of the thesis are those printed in the class readers and papers. Some of these titles are inaccurate, or have been attributed to the poems by the editors. Numbers of these poems are extracts from poets' longer works that the editors did not always acknowledge, for example, William Cowper's *The Deserted Village* and *The Task*, Oliver Goldsmith's *The Traveller*, Wordsworth's 'Lines Composed above Tintern Abbey', Byron's *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage*, Walter Scott's *Marmion* and *The Lady of the Lake*, Milton's 'Nativity Ode' and Adam Lindsay Gordon's *Ye Wearie Wayfarer*.

Because editors of the nineteenth-century readers often failed to acknowledge the writers of the poems, it has sometimes been difficult to distinguish between anonymous poems and those whose writers were not identified. In such instances, the poems have been listed in the tables and referred to in the thesis as 'anonymous/unattributed'

Official Tasmanian Government publications comprise much of the source material for the thesis. These publications have been listed in the 'Works cited' under the heading 'Tasmania', unless a specific author is attributed to the work.

This study examines the teaching of poetry in Tasmanian educational institutions from colonial times to 1950. It traces the development of prescribed canons of poetry taught in Government primary schools from 1841, and identifies the poems prescribed for secondary public examinations from 1861 and those taught at the University of Tasmania from its foundation in 1891. It discusses the nature of this poetry and the methods of its teaching and assessment, and considers changes that occurred in the pedagogical value and function of poetry during the period.

The work stems from my involvement with learning and teaching poetry for a period of some sixty years. For most of this time, the poems I read and subsequently taught were controlled by what Charles Bernstein has called the 'well-guarded gates of official verse culture' (246). In my case, these gates were guarded by the Tasmanian Department of Education and the University of Tasmania. I first entered the gates as a pupil at a small rural one-teacher primary school in the 1940s and remained within their keeping throughout high school and university in the early 1950s. Subsequently, as a teacher within the State's education system, I served as a guardian of 'official' poetry until the end of the century.

Family interests and social circumstances meant that during my youth I did not experience those informal contacts with poetry described by writers such as Dana Gioia and Donald Hall whose mothers 'read and recited it [...] from memory' (Gioia 1). Hall's mother read poems aloud 'from a wonderful anthology called *Silver Pennies*, performing dramatically or poetically, never trying to sound merely natural' (Hall 4). His grandmother recited 'in singsong' hundreds of lines of poetry she had memorised as a child, and his grandfather milked the cows in rhythm to his recitation of 'bouncy, enthusiastic poems', the subjects of which Hall could recall in later life. In Hall's childhood, poetry was a 'portion of social life' both as a form of entertainment and an expression of 'righteous common sense' (4-5). Films, wider reading and conversations with neighbours led him to 'a mad sequence of enthusiasms' for poets ranging from Edgar Allan Poe, John Keats, P.B. Shelley, and T.S. Eliot to a number of contemporary American poets (6-7). Some of his teachers fostered this enthusiasm and encouraged his writing.

Any similarity between my childhood experiences and those of Hall is limited to recollections of nursery rhymes and a few stanzas from Robert Browning's 'Pippa Passes' and Alfred Tennyson's 'The Lady of Shalott' which my mother taught me and expected me to recite to relatives and visitors. If my grandparents knew poetry they did not share it with me, and poetry did not feature in the social life of my community, or in conversation with my friends. My induction to the world of poetry was controlled by the compulsory syllabuses of the Tasmanian Education Department, particularly in the primary, School Certificate and Matriculation years where poetry comprised a limited number of specified poems set for study and examination.

Poetry for me was a thoroughly institutionalised experience and my recollections of those times illustrate some of the issues considered in this study. The teachers at my primary school appeared to have little commitment to, or love of, poetry beyond some Australian ballads and English folksongs; and the school's library comprised less than fifty books, none of which were poetry texts. The poetry we read was restricted to the twenty or so poems included in each of the *Tasmanian Readers* prescribed for the six primary grades. The teachers' limited professional training and the Department's rigid inspectorial system meant that poetry was taught primarily to satisfy school inspectors that we could recite stanzas from memory, answer questions about the poets and explain the meanings of particular words and phrases in the poems. In fact, both the poetry my teachers taught, and their teaching methods, varied little from those they themselves had experienced as pupils a generation earlier. Although the Department had introduced the *Tasmanian Readers* in the 1930s, much of their content was drawn from previous class readers used in the State's classrooms since the previous century. In the 1940s, then, primary school pupils inherited an established canon of poems and a tradition of poetry teaching that provided very limited contact with contemporary writing and few opportunities to respond personally to what we read.

In high school, I was introduced to anthologies of poetry. These contained many more poems than the primary class readers, yet for most of this time we studied only a small number of poems in ways designed to prepare us for rigorous external examination questions on particular poems in our senior classes. Apart from some

possible latitude in the junior high school years, both teachers and pupils were constrained by a poetry syllabus that defined both the poems read and the methods of reading them. Poetry for me was part of a challenging learning program, rather than an enjoyable private activity. I read no poetry beyond the formal syllabus requirements until my teacher-training year.

The poetry anthologies prescribed for the first three years of high school were contemporary English publications, *Adventures into Poetry Book II*, selected and arranged by W.M. Daunt, and E.J.S. Lay's *Poets and Poetry Senior Book I* and *Poets and Poetry Secondary Book II*. My school chose these anthologies of English poems in preference to other available anthologies suitable for study at this level that included both English and Australian poems, at least one of which was recommended by the Schools Board of Tasmania.<sup>1</sup> Over fifty years later, it is instructive to consider the nature of the poetry included in these three anthologies, the editors' comments about poetry and its teaching, and the use my teachers made of these texts in the classroom.

The three anthologies contained no Australian poems; in fact I had no further formal contact with Australian poetry until my teacher-training year. The majority of the sixty-nine poems in *Adventures into Poetry II*, my first-year high school text, were by contemporary writers who the editor claimed 'sing to us in a modern way', no subject being 'too commonplace and no metre too unorthodox to provide them with material and inspiration' (ii). Some of these poets have long been forgotten – for example, Everest Lewin, William Canton, Susan Dantree and Phyllis Hartnoll – but others were included in later school anthologies from which I taught: Walter de la Mare, Christina Rossetti, A.E. Housman, Andrew Lang, John Galsworthy, James Stephens, Thomas Hardy, Henry Newbolt, John Keats, Alfred Tennyson, 'Fiona McLeod' and John Drinkwater. Their poems that I taught, however, were not those included in Daunt's collection. As this study demonstrates, while particular poets may maintain a place for some decades within the official verse culture of an institution, the choice of poems from their works varies significantly over time, according to changing educational values and practice.

Six of the poets in *Adventures into Poetry II* – Walter de la Mare, John Keats, Andrew Lang, Henry Newbolt, Christina Rossetti and Tennyson – were represented in the primary school readers of that time, but only Andrew Lang's 'Song of the Scythe' was common to both collections. Those by Keats (a short extract from 'Fancy' and six lines from 'I Stood Tiptoe') and Tennyson ('The Dragon-Fly' and section CXV from *In Memoriam*) were less demanding in vocabulary, imagery and allusion than those of their poems included in the *Tasmanian Readers* ('Ode to a Nightingale' and 'Ulysses'). Daunt's choice of poems by these poets illustrates changes in the nature of poetry favoured for junior students in the early 1950s, simple descriptions of the natural world, for example, replacing more serious heroic and didactic poems, or those of the high Romantic style.

In her preface addressed to teachers, Daunt wrote of building 'a foundation for the love of poetry', and claimed that the best way to encourage children to learn and appreciate poetry was to select 'the *right poems*' and for the teacher to present them well. She drew attention to features of the book designed to make poetry 'attractive' to pupils, the inclusion of coloured pictures and the arrangement of poems in order of difficulty (ii). Daunt concluded her anthology with notes addressed to pupils explaining how poets differed from other people:

A poet's senses are keener than those of other men [...]. His feelings are more easily roused, and they are more intense [...]. A poet's imagination is particularly vivid, thus he may see beauty in a common object where we see none. Poets are extremely sensitive to beauty: sometimes they may be almost overcome by the vivid awareness of beauty that they may experience in watching, for example, a sunset. It is this surge of emotion that often inspires a poet to write his verse. (83)

Daunt's description owed much to William Wordsworth's definition of the poet as a man with greater 'sensibility [...] enthusiasm and tenderness [...] greater knowledge of human nature, and a more comprehensive soul' than are 'common among mankind' ('Preface' 737). She explained that poets have special gifts that could not be taught, including 'an inborn ability to use words', an instinctive knowledge of the right words to describe responses, an 'inborn desire to *create* things', a 'good sense of judgement' and 'the grit to labour on' with 'energy and patience' (86-7). In 'A note for boys', she wrote that boys must never 'think of poetry as a subject for girls only' because the 'greatest poets are men', and illustrated this claim by referring to

aspects of the lives and works of John Keats, W.H. Davies and Walter de la Mare (87).

My study demonstrates that features of this discourse about the special quality of poets and their work were prevalent in teaching documents and syllabuses of the 1940s and 50s, but that their impact on students in the classroom and lecture hall was open to question because it was rarely reflected in teaching practices or methods of examining poetry. If my first-year high school teacher shared Daunt's views about the special nature of poetry and poets, she did not communicate them to the class, or encourage us to read or discuss them. During our first year, we listened as the teacher read poems aloud, and responded to the few questions or comments she directed at us. We were not expected to memorise or recite the poems; nor did the teacher explore or explain in any detail their subjects, themes and style, most of which were foreign to my experience. The poems made little impact on me; I found them to be 'ordinary' because they were examples of contemporary free verse that differed markedly from the traditional poems in the *Tasmanian Readers*. From today's perspective, I suspect that these poems were also foreign to my young teacher's experience, given her tertiary training and the nature of the poetry she had read and studied in primary and secondary schools. Had the editor provided notes and exercises on the poems, perhaps the teacher would have been more energetic and enthusiastic about teaching them.

Poetry study in second and third year high school became a more serious enterprise, based on Lay's *Poets and Poetry I and II*. Poets whose works were represented more than three times in the two anthologies were Walter de la Mare (7 poems), Rudyard Kipling (6), John Masefield, W.H. Davies and Tennyson (5), and Thomas Hardy, W.E. Henley, Robert Browning and Henry Newbolt (4 poems). Although all of these poets, except Hardy, Henley and Robert Browning, had been represented in my primary school readers, the only poems common to both collections were Davies's 'Leisure', Kipling's 'A Smuggler's Song' and Masefield's 'Roadways'. Pencilled notes in my school copies of Lay's two texts indicate that in second year we read and responded to 16 poems, 7 of which were those of either Walter de la Mare or James Stephens. In third year we studied 29 poems ranging from Richard Lovelace's 'To Lucasta, On Going to the Wars' to Ralph Hodgson's 'The Gipsy Girl'.

Lay grouped his poems thematically under headings such as 'The Poetry of the Earth', 'The Happy Heart', 'Home Thoughts', 'Women' and 'Men Who March Away', and stylistically under such headings as 'The Song', 'The Lyric' and 'Narratives of Events'. This was a relatively new concept for school anthologies at that time. Our teachers, however, chose not to present the poems within a thematic context, but focussed on the information Lay provided about the poets, his comments on the themes and style of the poems, and most particularly on the questions he posed in his 'Notes and Exercises', questions which he claimed would 'stimulate the mental activities of children' and 'guide' them 'to a fuller appreciation of the beauty of the poetry' (2). Those on John Masefield's 'Tewkesbury Road' from *Poets and Poetry II* illustrate the nature of these questions:

(1) This poem is full of colour. Quote examples. (2) Make a list of six pictorial phrases from the poem. (3) To what class of words do the italicised words belong? – *chattering* brook; *shifting* feet. What other words of the same class could you apply to a brook, and to human feet? (4) When do meadows "seem all a-ripple"? What is the underlying comparison in this phrase? (5) The poet has used homely phrases in his description of the natural scenes of the road. Quote instances. (6) Quote a line where the sound of *d* has been used alliteratively, and one in which the sound of *g* has been so used. (84)

In his preface, Lay alluded to the special status of poetry within the English classroom by contrasting its study to the transactional and utilitarian activities of other lessons, but I was not conscious of this contrast at that time. In third year, under the direction of the elegant Miss Olive Mahoney, poetry lessons were similar to those in mathematics; almost every week we prepared written answers to questions such as those on Masefield's poem, and they were marked conscientiously. Miss Mahoney had studied English at the University of Tasmania in the second decade of the century under Professor William Henry Williams and her emphasis on the linguistic structure and diction of the poems we studied, rather than any revelation of beauty that they provided, reflected his influence. Lay's notes and questions were eminently appropriate for her teaching style and intent. This approach to teaching poetry was excellent preparation for studying the poems set for the fourth- and fifth-year external examinations. In these two years, we undertook close textual study of pre-twentieth century poems and became increasingly skilled at writing weekly essays on



their themes and style. As a result, we performed well in the Matriculation English Literature examination.

My acquired ability to study a limited number of poems intensively for examination purposes and my lack of interest in reading poetry for any other reason proved an inadequate preparation for studying first-year English at the university under Williams's successor, Professor Albert Booth Taylor. He prescribed no set poetry texts for his first-year course on the 'Principles of Poetry', but issued typed notes whose contents assumed we were familiar with poetry from different eras and of various styles and forms. In his lectures he referred to many poems and a range of critical writings that in my confusion I ignored. It was a shock to attempt examination questions at the end of that year which expected me to discuss the general nature, function and value of poetry, rather than questions on specific poems and poets, which I had anticipated.

Professor Taylor did not liberate me from the textual study of specific poems to a consideration of the nature and function of poetry. I transferred from the academic study of English to teacher education where I trained to teach children in secondary modern schools, children who had failed the qualifying examination to enter high schools, but who were expected to continue their education for a further three years. Experiences during this training and my early teaching years caused me to appreciate the selective nature of the poetry I had studied during my schooling and to think about those questions Taylor had posed in English I.

### **The functions of poetry in education**

The English I taught in the secondary modern school was prescribed by a *Course of Study* that gave high priority to functional aspects of the subject, oral and written expression and comprehension. The Literature component of the course was designed to 'lead the pupils to an understanding and enjoyment of literature through reading and performing prose, poetry and drama, using as aids the media of films, radio, recordings, television and comics'.<sup>2</sup> Its aim was to 'make the pupils *readers*, not students of literature' (20). Literature was to relate 'to the pupils' daily lives and interests, and to the world outside the classroom' and impress pupils 'with the usefulness of books for the practical purposes of life' (19). Prose and drama were

given priority over poetry where the emphasis was 'on the reading of poems for enjoyment and the development of appreciation through listening, rather than on analysis and discussion' (22). Any class discussion of a poem's content and style had to be 'spontaneous and natural' and was never to be 'forced by the teacher's questions' (21). Within the context of this study, it is significant that this *Course of Study* did not claim for poetry any value or function other than 'enjoyment' and 'the development of appreciation', and that these two values appeared to be synonymous. And the reservations expressed in the *Course* about teacher intervention or direction in the reading process seemed to imply doubts about the possibility of achieving even these outcomes with secondary modern school students. Such reservations contrasted strongly with the educational values confidently attributed to poetry for other members of the student population at that time and for all students during the previous century. These values differed according to the perceived needs of various groups of students and according to contemporary philosophies of education that reflected broader social and political agendas. In Barbara Herrnstein Smith's terms, the values attributed to poetry were 'divergent' and 'contingent' on factors separate from the art itself.<sup>3</sup>

Changes in the values attributed to poetry in Tasmanian educational institutions between 1840 and 1950 were determined by the different functions it served within classroom pedagogy. Different though these functions were, however, they were described by a repertoire of images that in their constancy presented poetry as a positive agent in the educative process.<sup>4</sup> Three texts that considered the role of poetry in education, published at different times during this period, illustrate both the changing functions of poetry and the consistent belief in its salutary effect on students.

The American Quaker, Samuel Macpherson Janney (1801-80), published a book of poems in 1839 titled *The Last of the Lenapé and Other Poems*.<sup>5</sup> He prefaced his poems with 'An Essay on Poetry' that he described as a 'defence of poetry' written in a 'utilitarian age' preoccupied with 'pursuits which minister to the physical wants of man' rather than 'the wants of the mind'. He believed that the happiness of man was found not in his 'temporal possessions', but in 'the purity of his desires, and the harmonious action of his moral and intellectual powers' (9). The 'proper regulation

of these powers depends much upon early associations, and upon a refined taste', the source of which can be attributed to the perusal of poetry in 'youthful days' (9-10). Poetry's 'favourable influence' will prevent 'tender sensibilities from being entirely destroyed by the withering influence of a worldly spirit', because it is particularly effective 'as a medium to convey moral sentiments to the young':

There is a natural taste in all young persons for the melody of verse, – they generally show a fondness for the rhymes, the metre, and the alliteration of poetry, before they are capable of appreciating the beauty of the sentiments it conveys [...]. As the youthful mind advances in knowledge, the taste for metrical composition generally increases in proportion as the capacity to perceive the higher beauties of style, becomes enlarged and improved. Perhaps there is no season in which we enjoy those pleasures with a higher relish, than just before that period arrives when we are to enter upon the arduous duties of life. (10-1)

Janney concedes that the 'arduous duties' of adult life may temporarily diminish a 'relish for literature' that has 'taken root' in earlier life, but believes it will remain to 'again revive [...]' and become one of the sources of our highest enjoyment' (11). The type of poetry and literature appropriate for 'intellectual and spiritual enjoyments' is that which eschews 'wild and extravagant fictions', 'impure images' and descriptions of incidents 'too trivial' or 'too low or disgusting', but instead displays 'a discriminating taste to copy from real life, and yet to furnish a picture that shall at once afford pleasure and instruction' (12-13). Improper subjects for 'the contemplation of the inexperienced mind' are the 'turbulence and sophistries of lawless passion'. Proper subjects are those which display '[f]idelity to nature, and purity of moral sentiments', and those that 'cherish the Christian virtues' (13-15). These subjects 'soothe the perturbed spirit, and inspire the contemplative mind with a relish for piety, harmony and peace' (16). Janney attributes values and functions to poetry that are similar to those Joseph Lancaster (also a member of the Society of Friends) espoused in his reading materials and approaches to teaching that were adopted in Van Diemen's Land elementary schools in the 1840s. In his writings about the function of poetry within classrooms, Lancaster also uses images of growth and taste to affirm poetry's power to improve morality and promote Christian beliefs.<sup>6</sup> So important was this power, that pupils were expected to memorise and recite hymns and devotional poems in order to recall their sentiments in times of temptation.

In the early twentieth century, poetry continued to be selected and taught on the basis of the moral and social messages it conveyed to the young, but attention was also given to the art of poetry. There was a concern that pupils should understand and appreciate 'the very spirit and soul of fine writing'. These words appeared in the opening paragraph of E.A. Greening Lamborn's *The Rudiments of Criticism*, a text that was prescribed for English students at the University of Tasmania in the second decade of the century. Lamborn places more emphasis on poetry's value as 'a work of art that we may admire and love', than on its moral value (7):

But that poetry is not a means of supplying useful information or of training the memory – except to learn more poetry – or improving the morals, or providing sage axioms or grammatical examples, or serving any practical purpose, let us with joy admit and declare. It is the charm and the glory of poetry that its high and single purpose is 'to make glad the heart of man'. (8)

Lamborn's purpose is to develop children's 'instinctive appreciation' of poetry's beauty and demonstrate that it can be 'a means of culture within reach of the very poorest' (9). He emphasises poetry's value as a means of expressing feelings and emotions: 'That it should be an attempt to communicate a genuine emotion is the first condition of poetry' (11). From this it follows that a reader of poetry is moved as much by the manner of a poem's 'saying' as by its subject, and that '[c]riticism is the study of the art by which the poet presents the emotional aspects of things so as to communicate his own feelings to others' (12,13). Lamborn uses images of taste and growth when noting that some poets convey not true emotion, but 'that shadow of emotion, sentimentalism':

When emotion takes an inartistic form, the result is not poetry but a sort of echo of poetry, sometimes so like the real thing that only a cultivated taste can distinguish between them. (14)

He illustrates this point by comparing two extracts from poems which were studied in Tasmanian elementary schools during the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, Eliza Cook's 'The Old Arm-Chair' and William Cowper's 'On the Receipt of My Mother's Picture'. Lamborn prefers Cowper's poem because of its ability to 'transmute [emotion] into music' and its more successful 'command of the emotional medium' (16).

Lamborn devotes most of his text to a discussion of the various techniques a poet uses to become 'a maker of music, and of pictures' through the medium of language,

believing that a reader's understanding of these techniques will lead to a fuller appreciation of the art of poetry (18). He shows how this can apply in the classroom in a chapter titled 'Children's Exercises'. Here, appreciation of poetry ('children learning to 'love' poetry and read it in 'after years') is linked with another important function, the development of children's 'creative power' (138). In contrast to the 'unfruitful' conventional and mechanical language of many classroom subjects, an appreciation of poetry will 'awaken the zest for self-expression, and the sense of delight that comes with power over words' (148,140). Experiencing the language of poetry provides opportunities for expressing personal feelings, sometimes in original verse. Learning poetry by heart is legitimate only if the lines memorised are chosen by pupils themselves and learnt for 'pure delight', rather than for examination purposes. Enjoyment and creative activities are the 'seeds' of a future 'harvest'; the 'tree we want to raise is the love of fine poetry':

An acorn, fairly planted, may grow into a great tree, but a branch, however large, will wither if it is only stuck in. (156)<sup>7</sup>

As my study indicates, edicts from school inspectors that children should be taught to appreciate and enjoy poetry preoccupied, and sometimes confused, teachers for several decades in the first half of the century. At the same time, their concerns were heightened by A.B. Taylor's approaches to examining secondary school poetry. His examination questions and reports on students' responses reflected Lamborn's beliefs, but extended them by expecting students to demonstrate powers of analysis and discrimination.

Other factors that influenced perceptions about the function of poetry and that impacted on methods of its teaching were featured in the contents of the first issues of the journal *The Use of English*, published in 1949. This journal was edited by Denys Thompson, who had jointly written *Culture and Environment* with F.R. Leavis seven years earlier. Subtitled 'The Training of Critical Awareness', this text promoted the 'school-training of literary taste' and 'critical awareness of the cultural environment' (3,5). *The Use of English* reinforced and amplified this agenda for the teaching of English. In his first editorial Thompson wrote:

English for us is more than a subject. Its particular value (or 'use') is that it can create and heighten [a] critical attitude to our civilization [and] give unity and purpose to the syllabus [...]. The language we use has almost ceased to be a conveyor of heritage or a means of emotional and intellectual

understanding. This state of affairs can only be resisted by training people to treat words critically. (5)

Thompson supports his view by claiming that readers will acquire 'standards of judgement' and enlarge their 'cultural heritage' if they can 'absorb' poems by poets such as John Donne. In the same issue of the journal, Thompson's editorial colleague, Boris Ford, pointed to the quality of literature that should be studied in schools:

[L]iterature takes as its raw material feelings and aspirations and experiences; either it gives them an added sharpness or it blunts them. It can either explore the deeper and more invigorating reaches of experience or it can take an aggressive stand on a rubble of spurious ideas and hackneyed situations [...]. We have an incomparably fine literature in which the richest and most profound moments of imagination have crystallized. Today the words are lost amid the welter of toothpaste instructions and nightcap blandishments, amid the Ships of State and the strong-jawed heroes, amid the deadness of officialese and the banality of jargon. At such a time and, indeed, as a protection against this onslaught, we need to keep ourselves and above all our pupils in touch with the incisive emotional integrity of the words that make up our literary heritage. (14)

Thompson, Leavis, Ford and their colleagues attributed a powerful educational function to literature and poetry, equal to that espoused by Samuel Janney a century earlier. Now, however, literature's strength lies in its ability to foster 'critical discrimination [...] against hostile forces in the environment', rather than its power to engender 'a relish for piety, harmony and peace' (Mathieson 122; Janney 16). As Mathieson suggests, Thompson and his associates were 'warriors' fighting against a 'debased cultural environment', rather than 'preachers' of moral goodness (123). Contemporary teachers, such as Dorothy King at Chingford County High School in England, supported this crusade. King claimed that appreciation was 'the most important aspect of the teaching of English' because it trained 'children to think'. She affirmed that by providing 'a training in literary discrimination we hope to encourage an attitude of mind towards society and life as well as literature, and so preserve our standards' (188).

A regular feature of *The Use of English* was a section titled 'Criticism in Practice'. This comprised a series of comparative exercises designed 'to expose some of the tricks of tendentious writing' and to lead 'to appreciation of the most advanced kind' (30). These exercises usually included poems for students to discuss and compare.

Frank Whitehead's analysis of students' responses to Hardy's 'Snow in the Suburbs' and Lawrence's 'The Humming Bird' indicates what outcomes were expected from the practice of 'critical discrimination'. Whitehead expected a close study of poetic meaning by examining diction and imagery, and believed this would result in 'acute' and 'sensitive' understanding of subject and theme. He was aware of 'the problem of when and how to introduce conscious consideration of poetic technique', noting the confusion between 'knowing *how* the poet has achieved his effects' and 'experiencing the effects that the poets has achieved' (210).

As I demonstrate in chapters 3 and 4, problems arising from this confusion dominated the professional discourse about poetry teaching in Tasmania at the middle of the twentieth century, and appreciation in the form of 'critical discrimination' proved difficult to achieve and measure. An emphasis on the rigorous close reading and comprehension of poetry was an easier alternative for both teachers and examiners. At some levels of education, the aim that students should enjoy poetry appeared to have been forgotten as more importance was placed on their ability to understand a poem's theme, development of thought and artistry. L.E.C. Bruce noted the ease with which teachers could 'slide from an appreciation of poetry to an interest in technique', and raised other issues about the teaching of poetry using traditional images of cultivation to emphasise his points:

A study of the history of poetry teaching should be a beneficial, though possibly depressing, exercise for the teacher. No doubt he would find that faults for which the older teaching methods were discarded reappear in a different guise in the newer methods; that the struggle is not so much to break fresh ground in literary appreciation as to maintain, if necessary to recover and to cultivate what has been won from encompassing weeds; and if there is no rule of thumb for such cultivation – while in some years it is better to root out the tares, in others it is advisable to leave them until the harvest. Some techniques of considering poetry may be better than others, but all will become lifeless and obstructive if divorced from the enjoyment of poetry. This enjoyment and its communication are more important to the teacher than the ability to explain the use of assonance in Tennyson or sprung rhythm in Hopkins. (45)

My analysis of the teaching of poetry in Tasmania identifies a variety of classroom practices all designed to cultivate qualities of learning or particular beliefs perceived of value to both the individual learner and society. Over a period of one hundred years the desired outcomes of these practices changed. What was perceived to be a

good harvest in some decades was regarded as less so in others. The one quality of the harvest that Bruce regarded as essential – ‘enjoyment of poetry’ – was not always given similar status in the teaching of poetry during this period.

### **Institutional canons of poetry**

Literary historians and critics like Fowler, Kermode, Guillory and Bloom remind us that the term ‘canon’ evolved from the formation of a set of biblical texts privileged as orthodox because they supported religious communities’ particular beliefs about Christian history and theology; and that the meaning of the term was subsequently extended to describe those literary texts that for various reasons and in various settings were considered to be ‘classics’. The etymological association of the word ‘canon’ with religious judgements and laws is particularly relevant within the time frame of this study. The poetry taught, its functions in the educative process, and the classroom practices prescribed to fulfil these functions were ordained by authorities, and, initially at least, associated directly with the promulgation of Christian beliefs. Although the religious authority accorded poetry in the 1840s diminished later in that century, poetry retained an authority based on a belief in its positive influence on children’s moral and social behaviour. At the same time, biblical images of cultivation used to express poetry’s influence evolved into more general images of growth and development that became a permanent feature of the discourse about poetry’s power to enhance desirable personal qualities and social attitudes.

The relatively timeless and permanent nature of the biblical canon cannot be applied to the poetry taught in educational institutions. Poetry taught in schools and universities changes according to different educational functions of the genre, functions conditioned by the values and beliefs of contemporary society. John Newcomb is right to question the ‘widespread and casual use’ of the term canon, as ‘an unspecified singular noun’:

In current usages, the word floats weightlessly through innumerable levels of specificity, temporality, and value. Any individual commentator on literary matters, social or institutional entities at many levels, and groups based on socio-economic, ethnic, regional, sexual, and other orientations – all may have their own canons [...]. (9)

In such circumstances, canons of poems studied over a period of time cannot be compared to Bloom’s single ‘Western Canon’ of works chosen on the basis of their



timeless qualities of sublimity, originality and aestheticism, or what Charles Altieri describes as their 'transideological' nature. (59).<sup>8</sup> Nelson states that nothing we 'say or think about a poem is free of social construction':

[Poetry] is always a function of the assumptions and urgencies of our psychology, our critical models, our disciplinary aims and defenses, and our own historical moment. (10)

The values teaching institutions attribute to poetry are based on their general educational aims and objectives that change according to the 'historical moment'. These aims and objectives are made explicit in curriculum statements and examination procedures whose prescriptions regulate and manage what and how knowledge is acquired and measured. Each subject discipline is defined not only by prescribed texts, but also by precepts about their interpretation, and the teaching and examining procedures adopted to achieve and measure the desired outcomes. In each case, canons of texts to be studied and canons of precept and praxis serve to endorse and enforce institutions' educational aims and the beliefs on which they are based. Together these comprise, in Guillory's words, 'the canonical curriculum':

Canonicity is not a property of the work itself but of its transmission, its relation to other works in a collocation of works – the syllabus in its institutional locus, the school. (*Cultural Capital* 55)<sup>9</sup>

From 1841 to 1950, Tasmanian Government schools were controlled by a Board and subsequently by a Department of Education. Both the Board and the Department prescribed courses of study and syllabuses for primary education that specified the subjects to be taught, in each case listing the required texts and teaching approaches, standards to be reached at each grade level and the methods of measuring these standards. The Board of Education and, from its inception in 1891, the University of Tasmania also published requirements for external certificate examinations and 'Details of Subjects' for degree examinations, in both cases specifying subject content and the texts to be studied. The poems read in classrooms, and the manner in which they were taught and assessed, changed according to whether the major curriculum priorities were, for example, to focus on the basic skills of speaking and reading, to improve children's morality and Christian virtue, to foster their enjoyment of literature and their creative ability, or to develop their standards of appreciation. Similarly, at the secondary and university levels, the function of poetry

changed according to current priorities in the teaching of English, whether these were linguistic, historical, thematic or the training of students in literary appreciation and discrimination. This study examines the degree and nature of the changes in the poems studied, in the educational values accorded poetry, and in methods of its teaching.

### **Tasmanian canons of poetry, precept and practice**

Roger Fowler identifies three categories of literary canon: a 'potential canon' comprising the 'entire written corpus [and] all surviving oral literature'; a 'limited accessible canon', limited because of the rarity of certain texts, or because of censorship or lack of reproduction; and 'selective canons' representing choices of works from the accessible canon made on the basis of preference and availability (214-5). The selective canons of poetry prescribed for Tasmanian primary classrooms from 1841 until the 1930s were constituted by school readers published for British or Irish schools, or compiled and published in other Australian states. During the same period, those prescribed for secondary and tertiary study were based on what was taught and examined in British schools and universities. These canons were therefore both selective and 'received' or 'inherited' from other education systems. Tasmanian primary school children read and studied a canon of poems that had been constructed to meet the needs of their counterparts in other countries or states. The nature of this poetry confirmed the island's political, cultural and educational colonial status, traces of which persisted in the early decades of the twentieth century when much of the poetry studied promoted imperial patriotism, rather than national sentiment. It was not until the second decade of that century that any selective canons of poems based on choices made at the local level were taught in Tasmanian schools. Similar local initiatives resulting in changes to the poetry studied at the university were taken in the 1940s, even before they occurred at the secondary certification level.

For most of the nineteenth century, Tasmanian primary schools were managed and regulated almost entirely by the school readers. Initially, schools' entire learning and assessment programs, except for mathematics, were based on the readers, with the result that these texts controlled the working and learning lives of both teachers and pupils.<sup>10</sup> Teachers seeking classification and promotion were examined on the

readers' contents and how they would teach lessons based on their material. The authority invested in the readers in this period was similar to that invested in the Biblical canon by the church. In the first half of the twentieth century these readers continued to determine at least part of the daily teaching program, and school inspectors judged students' levels of literacy and literary appreciation on their ability to read and respond to their contents. In a similar manner, background texts prescribed for studying English at the secondary and university levels determined interpretative responses to the works studied.

The poetry included in the first readers prescribed for the colony's schools was the only poetry to which most students and some, if not many, teachers had access.<sup>11</sup> At that time, this poetry was both a 'selective canon' for teaching purposes and the only readily 'accessible canon'. My study identifies this first canon of poets and poems and compares it with succeeding canons of poets and poems included in a sample of school readers prescribed for schools during the next hundred years. The ten poets most frequently represented in the nineteenth-century readers, in descending order of frequency, were William Cowper, Shakespeare, William Wordsworth, Walter Scott, Thomas Campbell, Thomas Moore, James Montgomery, Felicia Hemans, H.W. Longfellow and Byron. In the first three decades of the twentieth century, a greater range and variety of poets featured in the readers and only four poets were accorded the same degree of representation as those in the nineteenth century: Shakespeare, Longfellow, Alfred Tennyson and Edward Shirley. At the secondary and university level from the 1860s to the 1930s, there was no marked change in the poets studied, the most popular at secondary level being Shakespeare, Cowper, John Milton, Edmund Spenser, Oliver Goldsmith, Scott, Thomas Macaulay and Tennyson, and at the University level Shakespeare, Milton, Spenser, John Dryden, Alexander Pope and Geoffrey Chaucer. The first Australian poet prescribed for study in Tasmanian educational institutions was Henry Kendall, one of whose poems was included in a primary school reader of the 1880s. When the *School Papers* were the prescribed readers for primary schools from 1906 until the mid 1920s, Australian poets became a regular feature of primary school reading. Australian poetry was rarely studied or examined at the secondary level before 1950, but featured strongly in one of the English courses at the University of Tasmania from 1946 to 1950.

The fact that many of the same poets were studied throughout this period could appear to support Bloom's idea of a single 'Western Canon'. Works by Shakespeare and Longfellow, for example, featured strongly in primary school readers for some ninety years and there were few changes in the poets studied at more advanced levels. As suggested above, however, canonicity includes the value and function of poetry within teaching syllabuses. Changes accorded to the function of poetry dictated to a considerable degree the actual poems selected for reading and study. Although some poets retained a place in the canon, the specific works chosen from their *oeuvres* differed significantly over time. The poems that were represented in readers at different stages during the period revealed more clearly the beliefs that conditioned the teaching, than did the poets themselves.

Such differences were most noticeable at the primary level and reflected changes in educational aims and objectives. An obvious example is the choice of Isaac Watts's poems from 1840 to the early 1900s. The British and Foreign School Society reading sheets and *Daily Lesson Books* used in elementary classrooms in the 1840s contained Watts's hymns, such as 'An Evening Prayer' and 'Creation and Providence'. Later readers replaced these with those of his poems that promoted desirable social behaviour such as how to relate to peers and adults ('Against Quarrelling and Fighting'), and the importance of productive work ('The Sluggard'). And when one of Watts's hymns, 'O God our help in ages past', was included in the *School Paper* in the 1920s, its theme related to national and social life rather than to sin, redemption and personal salvation. Extracts from Shakespeare favoured in readers of the 1850s focussed on good deeds, the 'uses of adversity', productive use of time and the falsity of outward show. Near the end of the century, the chosen extracts celebrated qualities of patriotism including England's triumphs in battle; and in the twentieth century the readers gave more prominence to Shakespeare's lyrics and descriptions of nature.

Conversely, individual poems that retained a place in school readers over a period of time revealed certain beliefs and values that were fundamental to the learning process. Poems that appeared in at least four separate readers in the nineteenth century were Wordsworth's 'The Pet Lamb', Longfellow's 'Psalm of Life' and 'The Village Blacksmith', Colley Cibber's 'The Blind Boy', Byron's 'The Ocean' and

Shelley's 'The Cloud'.<sup>12</sup> These seven poems represent the major themes of much of the literature and the teaching during this time: didactic messages about the right way to live life, acceptance of one's lot in life, care of animals, and respect for nature. Byron's 'The Ocean' was the only one of these poems included in twentieth-century readers with any frequency. Wordsworth's 'The Pet Lamb' disappeared from the classroom canon to be replaced by his 'The Daffodils'. By 1950, Longfellow's two didactic poems about life had fallen from favour and were replaced by his poems of action and heroism such as 'Paul Revere's Ride' and 'The Arsenal at Springfield'. Keats, Shelley and Wordsworth were now accepted into the canon as Romantic poets representing personal responses to, and imaginative identification with, landscape. The only poem in the twentieth-century readers that appeared as frequently as Byron's 'The Ocean' was Scott's 'My Native Land'. The canon of poets and poems studied in schools increased in range and diversity, partly because of the need to include verse appropriate for younger children and to give adequate representation to Australian poems. While didactic and moral themes continued to feature in some poems, equal importance was attributed to poems that entertained children with action, adventure and humour, or encouraged imaginative responses to the landscape and the Australian environment.

The increase in the variety of poetry and the range of poets read in primary school classrooms in the early decades of the twentieth century preceded similar changes at the secondary and tertiary levels. Major developments at these levels occurred in the 1930s, beginning with the serious study of the Romantic poets, followed by considerable emphasis on contemporary poetry, particularly at the university level. Here, the introduction of prescribed anthologies released students, at least to some extent, from the nineteenth-century preoccupation with poets from the traditional canon. Despite this, however, the teaching and examining of poetry in secondary schools and the university did not experience the degree and rapidity of change that occurred in the primary sector in the 1940s.

Educational aims and objectives influenced classroom methods of teaching poetry to the same extent that they determined the selective canons of poems read. Canons of practice developed during this period to ensure that students read and responded to the poems according to their perceived value within the educative process.

Elementary school teaching in the 1840s in Van Diemen's Land was modelled on the precepts of the British and Foreign School Society whose aims were to teach 'the rudiments of letters' and 'to inform the mind with moral and religious truth'.<sup>13</sup> This truth was the 'Divine Truth' of the Bible which the Society's educators believed should be 'stored up' in a child's 'understanding and memory' by constant 'reiteration' (Dunn 151). Memorisation and recitation were strategies employed both to teach children to read and to 'root' these 'Divine Truths' in children's minds. The rhythm and rhyme of hymns and devotional verse were ideal for both tasks. At this stage, poetry's major function was to imprint the Christian message on young minds; children did not read or study poetry as a form of literature.

In the 1860s and 70s, educational precepts based on the Irish National System of Education dominated local teaching practices. Again, poetry was a medium for teaching children to read and write, but the verse they read focussed on other important values. While some poems continued to convey themes of Christian hope and comfort, much of the poetry children read promoted the general moral, social and practical needs of society. Memorisation and recitation of verse remained important classroom practices, but now attention was paid to children's closer understanding of the texts, some of which illustrated important practical lessons on the seasons, animal life, the dangers of lightning and natural history, while others conveyed social and moral values about the importance of hard work, thrift and relationships with others. Children were tested on their understanding of poetry's subjects and themes. Poetry was accorded no special status as literature.

In the early 1900s, with the advent of beliefs and classroom practices based on the precepts of the 'New Education', this approach changed. For the first time in Tasmania, poetry itself was considered to be a 'civilising' and 'refining' influence, capable of enhancing the individual child's emotional and imaginative powers.<sup>14</sup> Poetry was accorded status on the timetable as a subject in its own right and teaching practices were designed to ensure that pupils responded to the aesthetic qualities of the poem, as well as its subject matter. Classroom methods were instigated to make vivid both the meaning and language of the poetry. These methods included the use of aids such as pictures and blackboard drawings, and class activities such as informal discussion, imaginative writing and 'natural' recitation. The Director and

his inspectors were so preoccupied with these teaching methods that the methods themselves appeared to assume an importance equal to that of the poetry.

By the 1920s, rather than being a medium for espousing Christian virtues or similar didactic themes, poetry was assigned some sort of spiritual value in its own right. In Sansom's words, reading poetry and literature became 'a kind of creative reception' of 'a religion', an 'almost sacramental' act of transmitting 'the magic of utterance' (89). The poem itself was worthy of sincere personal response and in-depth appreciation. Entire lessons were devoted to fostering appreciation of single poems by set procedures based on cognitive theories of learning, the end result being that teachers had to satisfy inspectors that children could 'feel' and 'taste' the poem as a literary artefact, as well as understand its meaning. The 'poetry appreciation' lesson reigned supreme for several decades.

A natural extension of this approach was to assign to poetry the ability to protect young people from the 'cheap' and 'meretricious' aspects of language and life. Methods of close reading and appreciation fostered in children powers of 'critical awareness' and discrimination, and the ability to make judgements. Children now had to achieve more than 'appreciate'; they had to compare, analyse, and assess poetry on the basis of standards of aesthetics, language, imagery, and others' 'felt experiences'. And poetry lessons now sometimes included the comparison of two or more poems, often on similar themes, with the students being taught procedures to evaluate the degree of sincerity, power and value of each poem's representation of life. As with earlier classroom practices, this comparative and discriminating process became codified to such an extent that it tended to privilege the rituals of analysis over personal responses to textual meaning and artistry.

### **History as 'liberatory memory'<sup>15</sup>**

In 1972, David Shayer regretted that most writers on English in education were 'strangely reluctant to look very far over their shoulders' in order to examine the history of the subject (1). He believed that a study of past teaching practices would illuminate current approaches to teaching and inform debates about the future of the subject. In 1980, Brian Doyle suggested that those writers who did examine the history of the subject described its function 'as guarantor and constant regenerator of

particular versions of the past', versions of a 'classical' and 'cultural' ideal past that portrayed the subject as an almost seamless 'narrative of continuity'. Doyle believed that this 'tyranny of [...] 'classical' and 'cultural' pasts' deflected attention from a 'material' history of 'specific social and institutional contexts' that would provide a more accurate 'understanding of the social force of the various practices which have both produced and been produced by 'English' in its many educational guises' (23-4). He recommended that such contexts should include a consideration of the role of English within specific 'historical episodes' and across 'the existing hierarchies of English teaching' to encompass teachers within schools and further education, as well as 'cultural workers outside the formal system of education' (31-2).

In a discussion of Tony Bennett's *Formalism and Marxism*, particularly Bennett's concept of 'consumptional production', Peter Widdowson applied Doyle's argument specifically to the values and functions of literature within the educative process:

Because literature only becomes 'Literature' within the historical conjuncture in which it is 'consumed' (i.e. by way of the values and uses it is *given* at that conjuncture), and because 'texts' only become 'texts' in the relationships which a particular 'literary system' creates between them, criticism must address itself to understanding the 'consumption' of literature at any given historical moment. In the process of consumption literature is constantly 're-produced' (so that 'value', too, becomes an endlessly transformed attribute) [...]. Only in the moment of 'consumptional production' does value inhere. ('Literary Value' 143)

Some contributors to Widdowson's *Re-Reading English* related the changing values accorded literature in historical periods to social and political ideologies. Doyle pointed out that if these ideologies are viewed as the hidden curriculum of the texts studied, then there are no 'innocent' texts and no 'innocent responses' to them' (28). In his contribution, Anthony Easthope described the literary criticism of poetry (and hence its teaching) as usually 'unconscious, complicit, passive'. He believed that rather than assume poetry as a 'given', it should be questioned, 'seeking always to make its preconceptions explicit, constantly probing the ground on which it stands for ideological complicity'. Easthope described this approach as the '*politics* of reading' (148).

By the late 1980s, however, critics such as John Bowen were suggesting that work within English criticism was concentrating 'almost exclusively on chronicling the



course of critical debates and the development of theoretical and political traditions, rather than concerning itself with the teaching practices of the disciplines':

Unless we can begin to [...] write the history of 'English' not in the idiom of the History of Ideas, the circulation of Great Ideas between Great Minds, but as an instrumental practice of teaching, social discipline, and regulation, then we are in danger of becoming complicit with already-discredited definitions of the subject. (77)

Bowen believed that this history would describe a 'politics of pedagogy, and the relations of power and knowledge within [...] institutions', and, most particularly, the actual reading and teaching practices within these institutions (78):

that dense mass of garrulous particulars, that neurotic, endlessly repetitive discourse which is literary teaching and criticism [...]. (83)

These 'garrulous particulars' would include classroom procedures, the objects of study, teacher talk and attitudes, all presenting not a 'neutral set of theoretical theories', but an 'ensemble of institutional practices' in the real world of the classroom and lecture hall at any historical moment (92). Tony Davies describes this real world of the classroom as 'the untheoretical day-to-day teaching of the subject'. For Davies, the question 'What does it mean to "read English"?' is less important than the question 'what [...] does it mean to *teach* it?' (91). He concludes that it would be both useful and instructive to have 'a proper history of teaching: not of education [...] but of the institutional and lived relations, the ideological-discursive economy of pedagogy' (98).

Leigh Dale's 1997 analysis of the history of the teaching of English in Australian universities illuminates the teaching of the subject within the Australian context by addressing some of these issues in considerable detail. She demonstrates that what is 'actually taught in the literature classroom is *not* 'the text', but the proper mode of responding to it' (4):

What we are able to read, and what we are able to think and write, are by no means the product of free enquiry [...]: these are shaped by what it is institutionally desirable to know and say. (195)

Dale acknowledges the need to extend such accounts as hers to other levels of schooling and to focus 'on what happens in classrooms [...]: the practices, and the long-term impact, of teaching and learning' (201).

In North America, both Alan Golding and Christopher Beach consider the power of teaching institutions in their studies of American poetry. Golding's analysis of canon formation in American poetry examines how contingencies of value 'work at particular sites and moments of practice', and demonstrates how any historical period has its 'ways of seeing and reading' poetry, and that these ways are illustrated by a particular poetic discourse, specific definitions of the function and value of the poet and poetry, and methods 'for reinforcing and disseminating judgements' about these discourses and definitions (xvi, 59). Golding's methods of examining poetry anthologies and the influence of classroom texts such as Brooks and Warren's *Understanding Poetry* are useful strategies for any analysis of the ways in which poetry texts are produced and used in classrooms. Beach's more ambitious study of the cultural dynamics of poetry in the 'pluralistic and culturally decentralized society' of the contemporary United States covers fields broader than the teaching of poetry in educational institutions (13). Within this broad field, however, he recognises the power of institutional pedagogy to initiate, validate, conserve and protect poetry canons, and acknowledges this to be a 'relatively underdeveloped field of inquiry' (9).

The field I examine in this thesis is more homogeneous and less extensive than the areas covered by Dale, Golding and Beach. By focussing on the 'official verse culture' and the methods of its teaching in educational institutions within Tasmania through one century, I deal with a period of time and a setting where centralized and bureaucratic groups, similar in cultural, socio-economic and educational backgrounds, formed a stable system of authority less complex than those examined in many other studies. Some research undertaken by Australian and British scholars working in similar, clearly defined, fields has been most useful in providing frames of reference and strategies of analysis for my work. Four writers, in particular, have informed the processes and outcomes of my study. Ian Michael's survey of textbooks used in the teaching of reading, spelling, rhetoric, logic, composition, grammar, elocution, poetry, fiction and drama in England from the sixteenth century to 1870, and his two subsequent annotated guides to this material, are rich resources for the background information and methods of content and statistical analysis used in my discussion of poetry texts read in Tasmanian schools and the University of Tasmania. Two outcomes of Michael's work are particularly significant. His descriptive list of

three hundred and eighty-eight school texts published in England before 1830 suggests that the place given to English literature in British schools in the eighteenth century was 'more important than is generally supposed' (*Literature in School* 2). This challenges claims that English 'is a relatively recent addition to the curriculum' and confirms that the function of poetry as a medium for language study and for conveying moral 'truths' in Tasmanian elementary education in the 1840s was an inheritance of precepts and practices which had been established in England from as early as the sixteenth century (*Teaching of English* 1). Michael's frequency counts of poets appearing in various school anthologies from 1717 have proved useful measures against which to compare the frequency with which particular poets featured in texts used in Tasmanian classrooms. Measures which Michael does not undertake in any detail, no doubt because of the sheer scope of his work, but which have proved illuminating in my study, are the continuity or 'longevity' of certain poets in classroom texts over time, and, perhaps even more revealing, the durability of certain poems over similar periods. Michael's particular interest in 'what teachers did [...] their intentions and [...] the methods by which they tried to realise them' stimulated my desire to discover answers to the same questions within the Tasmanian scene (*Teaching of English* 1). Equally helpful for my work, particularly in the area of subject content analysis, was Goldstrom's study of school readers used in British and Irish schools in the nineteenth century. The themes he identifies as dominating the contents of the readers prescribed between 1808 and 1870 have provided a useful framework for my analysis of nineteenth-century Tasmanian readers. Goldstrom's historical research relating to the British and Foreign School Society and the National System of Education in Ireland has been an invaluable source of background information for my study, and his methods of statistical analysis have informed my work in that area.

Australian research that most closely relates to my work is that published by Peter Musgrave and S.G. Firth. Musgrave's detailed analysis of Victorian school textbooks from 1851 to 1968 and his study of secondary examinations are models of incisive and comprehensive analysis of both the contents of English syllabuses and classroom texts and the social and educational forces that influenced them.<sup>16</sup> The fact that the same school readers were used in Victorian and Tasmanian schools at times between 1850 and 1920 has meant that I have benefited from Musgrave's interpretation of

their contents, particularly his analysis of Australian themes of national identity and 'patriotic geography' ('How Should We Make Australians?' 13). Musgrave's analysis of the *School Paper* and the work of its editor, C.R. Long, have been particularly enlightening. Firth's study of the social values fostered by primary school texts in New South Wales from 1880 to 1914 has confirmed the role of poetry in supporting the major moral and social didactic themes that dominated the material read by children in classrooms at that time.

My study differs from those of Musgrave and Firth because it restricts its focus to the poetry contained in primary school texts over a period of one hundred years, and to some aspects of poetry teaching at secondary and tertiary levels. It differs significantly from studies by Golding and Beach because it considers poetry within teaching institutions only. Although critical and theoretical issues arise in the course of my analysis, my work does not attempt to address these matters in the detail provided by the research of Dale and Widdowson, for example. My work is essentially a case study of the content and pedagogy of poetry at the three levels of schooling in Tasmania arranged chronologically from the beginning of organised Government education in the 1840s until 1950. As I argue in my concluding chapter, the decade of the 1950s marked the beginning of the diminishing prestige of poetry in Tasmanian schooling. For most of the preceding period, poetry occupied the most privileged position within literary studies. Reasons for poetry's diminishing status include changes in the bureaucratic control of schooling, a widening of the literary curriculum, changes in pedagogical practice, and a loss of confidence in contemporary methods of teaching and examining the genre. Historical studies by Ian Hunter and Ian Reid inform my discussion of the changing status of poetry in education at that time.

The period of time encompassed by this study has imposed limits on the subject matter. At the primary level, I have restricted the study to Government schools and a sample of the prescribed reading texts that were the main channels for conveying poetry to schools throughout the whole period.<sup>17</sup> My source material also includes Education Department reports of school inspections and Merit and Qualifying examinations conducted by the Department at times throughout the period. These inspectors' reports and the Education Department's syllabuses and associated

documents provide insights into the official beliefs about the values and functions accorded poetry at various times from 1841 to 1950. Chapters 1 and 3 discuss the poetry taught in primary schools, methods of teaching and examining the subject, and changes in the values of functions accorded poetry during one hundred years.

Sources for the analysis of poetry taught at secondary and university levels are the course outlines and syllabus statements issued by examining bodies, the public examination papers for certification at the secondary level, and the University of Tasmania's English examination papers. Together with examiners' comments, these sources provide evidence of the poetry studied and some evidence of institutional attitudes to the values and functions of poetry. A scarcity of local contemporary commentary on poetry teaching at these levels has meant that I have drawn conclusions about teaching practices from a more limited range of material than that available for the primary sector. I recognise that examinations by their very nature often limit approaches to the teaching of literature, but believe these limitations can serve to highlight the 'real' world of a system's priorities in contrast to the sometimes 'ideal' world promoted in syllabus statements and discussion papers.<sup>18</sup> Chapters 2 and 4 describe the poetry taught in senior secondary and tertiary years.

Both Dale (201) and Morgan (230) comment on the need to consider the impact of teaching on students' personal responses and attitudes to literature. While I have not been able to address this imperative in certain methodological ways, I have relied on the archive of teachers' comments and inspectors' and examiners' reports to gain an impression, however limited, of how students responded to poetry in this period. There is an obvious need to undertake longitudinal studies of students' experiences of literary texts in classrooms and the influence, if any, such experiences have on their future reading and literary activities. A somewhat easier task is to identify those leading educators whose commitment to the study and teaching of poetry furthers the subject's impact within and beyond learning communities. My thesis acknowledges several such men and women whose enthusiasm for the subject and belief in the power of poetry to enhance children's lives made a strong impact on literary education in Tasmania in the first half of the twentieth century.

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## Notes

<sup>1</sup> These anthologies include Ian Maxwell and A.A. Phillips's *In Fealty to Apollo* (1945), Furnley Maurice's *Path to Parnassus* (1943), J.J. Stable's *The Bond of Poetry* (1941) and E.W. Parker's *The Poets' Way Stage II* (1949). The Schools Board recommended Parker's anthology for junior secondary classes, and prescribed Rex Ingamells's *New Song In An Old Land* for fourth year English for several years from 1949.

<sup>2</sup> *Course of Study for Secondary Schools: English* (1958): 19. Further quotations from this document appear in the text, in parenthesis.

<sup>3</sup> See Smith's essay 'Contingencies of Value' in Robert von Hallberg's *Canons* (5-39).

<sup>4</sup> Robert Morgan refers to Barthes's concept of 'image repertoire' in his 'The 'Englishness' of English Teaching' (204).

<sup>5</sup> A copy of this text is held in the Quaker Collection in the Morris Miller Library, University of Tasmania.

<sup>6</sup> Lancaster's ideas about the function of poetry in the teaching of reading and his use of images of growth and taste are discussed in more detail in chapter 1 of this thesis.

<sup>7</sup> In his 'A Defence of Poetry', Shelley uses the same image for a similar purpose: 'All high poetry is infinite; it is as the first acorn, which contained all oaks potentially [...] (513).

<sup>8</sup> See Harold Bloom's *The Western Canon* (3, 7, 524).

<sup>9</sup> Guillory uses the term 'canonical curriculum' in his 1990 essay 'Canon' (243).

<sup>10</sup> Apple (8), Beavis (17) and Firth (126) all refer to the power of school texts in the management and regulation of the curriculum. In his review of Apple's *The Politics of the Textbook*, Ian Westbury describes textbooks as having 'long carried and institutionalised, both at symbolic and real levels, the curriculum' (1).

<sup>11</sup> I base this claim on the limited qualifications of many Tasmanian primary school teachers at that time. This subject is discussed in chapter 1 of this thesis.

<sup>12</sup> Wordsworth's 'The Pet Lamb' first appeared in Murray's *Introduction to the English Reader* in 1801. Shelley's 'The Cloud' appeared in Batt's *Gleanings in Poetry* in 1836. See Michael, *The Teaching of English* (195, 252).

<sup>13</sup> These words are from Wordsworth's 'The Excursion' and are quoted by Dunn in *Popular Education* (9).

<sup>14</sup> Director Neale expressed these sentiments during his period of office in the first decade of the twentieth century. The influence of Matthew Arnold is obvious; see chapter 3 (i) of this thesis.

<sup>15</sup> 'Liberatory memory' is Henry Giroux's term. See Robert Morgan's 'The 'Englishness' of English Teaching' 231.

<sup>16</sup> 'Readers in Victoria, 1896-1968, I: *The School Paper and Children's World*', 'How Should We Make Australians?', 'Readers in Victoria, 1896-1968: II, The Victorian Readers', 'Was there a 'Departmental Index' (*The Argus*, 24.8.10) in Victoria between 1872 and 1930?', *To be an Australian? Victorian School Textbooks and National Identity 1895-1965*, 'Distributor and Publisher: Victorian Education Departments and the Supply of Textbooks, 1851-1945', 'Readers in Victoria, 1851-1895', *From Humanity to Utility: Melbourne University and Public Examinations 1856-1954*.

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<sup>17</sup> As explained in the bibliographical note, this is not a statistically random sample of the readers. Availability of texts determined the nature and extent of the sample analysed in my study.

<sup>18</sup> Frances Stevens discusses these and related issues in *English and Examinations* (1970). See also Robert Protherough's *Teaching Literature for Examinations* (1986) and Brian Jackson's *English versus Examinations* (1965).

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## **1. POETRY AND THE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL CURRICULUM 1850 – 1900**

Elementary education was rudimentary and limited in the first decades of colonial Van Diemen's Land. Although Governors made various attempts to address its provision and supervision during this period, it was not until 1839 that measures were adopted to 'codify and regulate Tasmanian education' (C. Reeves 28).<sup>1</sup> From that year until the turn of the century, class readers governed much of the teaching in junior grades. Four sets of readers were prescribed during the period: *Daily Lesson Books* published by the British and Foreign School Society; the *Irish Readers* issued under the authority of the Board of Commissioners responsible for education in Ireland; the *Australian Reading books*; and, finally, the *Royal Readers*. A number of schools also used readers from the *New Australian School Series* near the end of the century. It wasn't until the 1920s that Tasmania began to publish its own reading materials for use in primary schools.

The contents of these five sets of classroom readers determined almost entirely the scope and nature of the poetry read in classrooms from 1840 to 1900. The educational value of poetry and the manner in which it was taught was dictated by the primary functions of elementary education in the colony, the teaching of basic skills in reading and arithmetic, and the improvement of the moral tone of the populace by removing what a writer in the *Van Diemen's Land Monthly Magazine* in 1835 described as the 'evils resulting from ignorance and vice' (Austin and Selleck 16).<sup>2</sup> Poetry was a relatively minor resource for such purposes and not taught as a separate subject for appreciation and enjoyment. Its impact, too, was limited by the educational background and qualities of the teachers, and the methods used to supervise their work and to assess pupils' progress.

### **The British and Foreign School Society's *Daily Lesson Books***

Government Notice number 98, published in the *Hobart Town Gazette* on 10<sup>th</sup> May 1839, announced Lieutenant-Governor Franklin's intention to implement a basic curriculum in 'Public Schools' according to the principles of the British and Foreign School Society (BFSS), and to prescribe daily 'readings of the entire Scriptures' (471). Subsequent instructions issued by the colony's Board of Education at the end of that year and revised in 1840 specified a curriculum that comprised reading, spelling, writing and arithmetic for both boys and girls and needlework for girls, and included the teaching of additional subjects, if requested by parents (*LCP* 1840, 9). The BFSS's 36<sup>th</sup> *Annual Report* (1840) noted that Governor Franklin had 'vigorously

carried into effect' the implementation of the Society's curriculum, and that its Committee had acceded to his request for 'six qualified masters and mistresses, thoroughly acquainted with the discipline and organisation of British schools' (39). Among these were James Bonwick and his wife, Esther, who arrived in Hobart in 1841 and taught at the Model School for several years. Bonwick's *Geography for the use of Australian Youth* was published in 1845, the first school text to be written and published in the colony.<sup>3</sup> Despite some modifications and exceptions, the BFSS's teaching methods and materials constituted the officially recognised curriculum in public elementary schools for the next decade.<sup>4</sup>

The Board of Education's 1840 Report to the Legislative Council included a copy of its 'Instructions to Masters and Mistresses of the Government Schools' that specified methods of teaching spelling and reading in schools. Pupils were divided into hierarchical classes beginning with learning the letters of the alphabet, and then moving sequentially to learning to read and spell words of two, three and four letters and then words of similar numbers of syllables. Teachers were to expect children to read 'distinctly, and rather slowly' and expected to 'interrogate' them 'in order to ascertain whether they understand what they are reading' (LCP 1840, 9-10). The example given to demonstrate this method of 'interrogation' was based on a biblical text, and suggested that the main reading material used in classrooms was scriptural and that the teaching practices were those which Joseph Lancaster (the founder of the BFSS) had outlined in his *Improvements in Education* (40-9).<sup>5</sup>

Letters from the Secretary of the Board of Education, Charles Bradbury, in the late 1840s indicate that there were regular demands from schools for BFSS teaching materials and frequent requests to the Government Printer for reprints of the Society's books and lesson charts.<sup>6</sup> In response to one such request, Bradbury wrote to Mrs Johnston at Hadspen School on 21 August 1848 advising that he had forwarded the following teaching materials: 12 copies of 'Nos 1 and 2 Books', 24 copies of 'The Faith and Duty of a Christian', 2 copies of 'Scripture Extracts', 3 copies of 'Crossley's Arithmetic', 1 set of spelling sheets, 1 copy of the Lord's Prayer and the Ten Commandments, 9 slates and 100 slate pencils (BoE 'Letterbook' 21 August 1848). All but one of the books in this parcel were published by the BFSS.

The 'Nos 1 and 2 books' were the *Daily Lesson Books* used to teach reading to the very junior classes. The 1850 BFSS catalogue described these two books as follows:

Daily Lesson Book, No. I ... 48pp.

Lessons in Prose and Verse, intended to furnish Moral and Intellectual Instruction, in words of one syllable only.

Daily Lesson Book, No. II ... 120pp.

Forty Prose Lessons and Forty Poetical ones, including a variety of Objects and a separate and complete course of Spelling. (BFSS *Annual Report* 1850: Appendix, n.p.)

These and the more advanced *Daily Lesson Books III* and *IV* comprised almost the entire reading material available to most children in public schools at that time. Some of the lesson material in *Lesson Books III* and *IV* related to history, geography and the arts, but much was of a religious nature focussing on moral behaviour.<sup>7</sup> The 'variety of Objects' included in *Daily Lesson Book II* referred to moral and religious topics such as 'Kindness to animals', 'Speaking the truth', 'Love to brothers and sisters', 'obedience to parents' and 'the Goodness of God'. In the senior elementary grades these topics were extended and included the following: 'Improvement of the mind'; the 'Evils' of infidelity, pride, self-conceit and 'profane swearing'; and the importance of cleanliness, temperance and 'keeping the Sabbath' (BFSS *Annual Report* 1841, 5). Poems included in each of the lesson books addressed many of these topics.

The BFSS's educational aims were defined clearly when the *Daily Lesson Books* were first published in the early 1840s:

The design of these books is to favour the production of good moral and religious influences, in connexion with a rigorous course of intellectual instruction and discipline. With this especial view the pieces have been selected, and the Committee consider that they are of a kind calculated to improve the minds and characters of young persons, to promote the cultivation of a humble, contented and domestic spirit, and to lead to the more intelligent perusal of the sacred Scriptures. (BFSS *Annual Report* 1840, 5)

These aims were expressed even more specifically in the syllabuses of some British schools conducted by the Society. In the 1840s, the Edinburgh Boys' School syllabus included the following:

The course of instruction is two-fold: intellectual, and moral and religious. Scriptural instruction is carried on in each department, and care is taken that in all cases intellectual development shall be made subordinate to moral

training, and solid instruction invariably preferred to any superficial acquirements, however well they might serve for temporary effect.

In all lessons, it is designed that scriptural instruction should be brought practically to bear on the conscience; all duty be enforced on the principles of the gospel, and from the word of God: and all sin shown to be displeasing to the Saviour and therefore to be hated and shunned. (BFSS *Annual Report* 1840, 4, 5)

In schools such as these, it was clear that the acquisition of literacy skills aided the Society's primary aims of providing 'scriptural instruction' and 'moral training'.

The 'Scripture Extracts' included in the school supplies forwarded to Mrs Johnston at Hadspen were copies of the BFSS's *Scripture Lessons for Schools on the British System of Mutual Instruction*, reprinted 'for the Van Diemen's Land Public Day Schools in 1846'. This text was based on the belief that to 'instruct the rising race in the principles [and] the doctrines, and the duties of Holy Writ [...] without note or comment [would] preserve them from the evils of vice, and lead them into the paths of pious rectitude [...]' (iv, v). The passages from the Bible included in the publication were arranged in four parts: 'Historical Lessons Selected from the Old Testament'; 'Lessons Selected from the Psalms'; 'Lessons on our Duty Towards God and Man Selected from the Holy Scriptures'; and 'Lessons Taken from the Four Evangelists and the Acts of the Apostles'.

The text *The Faith and Duty of a Christian* was a Church of England publication, reprinted in Hobart Town in 1846, and accepted by all religious denominations as a text suitable to be read in the schools (C. Reeves 33). The book's preface included an instruction from the Board of Education's Secretary to 'Teachers of the Van Diemen's Land Public Day Schools':

The daily business of the School is to be invariably preceded by the children saying aloud The Lord's Prayer: after which they are to say the following: We humbly beseech thee, O Heavenly Father! mercifully to grant that the instructions we are this day to receive from our Teachers may have the effect of enlightening our minds, and of making us to obey thy holy laws: through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen. (n.p.)

The book's contents included biblical texts and passages grouped thematically to teach moral precepts and appropriate social behaviour. Such themes included the following: 'Duty of Man to God – Faith – Repentance'; 'Fear of God – Love –

Obedience'; 'Submission in Adversity'; 'Duty of Men towards one another'; 'Duty of Husbands, Wives, Parents and Children'; 'Duty of Masters, Servants, Rulers and Subjects'; 'Duty of Man towards himself. Humility, Temperance, Diligence, contentment'; 'Sincerity, Growth in Grace'; and 'Concerning Rewards and Punishments'.

The Board of Education's Report for 1844 confirmed the importance given to the propagation of the Christian faith. It noted that in 'every School the Holy Scriptures are daily read by the pupils, and a wide dissemination of the contents of the sacred volume is thus being effected', and then recorded that a 'very large number of the children have committed a considerable portion of [*The Faith and Duty of a Christian*] to memory, and can reply intelligently to enquiries respecting it' (LCP 1844,1).

Such was the purpose of reading as expounded by Joseph Lancaster in *Improvements in Education* where he claimed that reading was not a 'study in itself', but a 'medium of religious and moral instruction' (40). This belief underpinned elementary educational practice in both England and the colonies at that time, particularly in the early years of the nineteenth century when religious groups were active in the provision of schooling.<sup>8</sup> Literacy was a necessary acquisition if young people were to access those 'ultimate truths' central to the social ideology of the times (Eagleton 23). Within such a context, the poetry taught in schools presented 'a powerful sense of moral purpose' and aimed to encourage an equally powerful moral response from its readers (Mathieson 11). The phrase 'improving verse' is perhaps too mild a term to encompass the significance then accorded poetry in classrooms.<sup>9</sup> This was an importance attributed to poems, not because they were 'good' literature, but because of the religious and moral virtues they conveyed. Together with the scriptures, poems in schools functioned as 'sacred texts' (Doyle 109). In Hunter's words, literacy itself and the reading material used to support its acquisition and development formed part of 'the apparatus of popular education', a 'moral technology' of control (16). Such control was evident in the nature of the poetry made available to schools and the manner in which it was taught.



In Van Diemen's Land during the 1840s it was relatively easy to exercise control over these matters because of the shortage of appropriate books and the free issue of approved classroom readers and lessons sheets to schools. In these circumstances, Stephen Ball's description of classroom readers as 'ubiquitous' is justified (65). Apart from basic arithmetic, a school's entire curriculum was controlled by their contents. Classroom readers were texts of power that legitimised and institutionalised the accepted values of the day, and the literary extracts they contained helped form a canon of works to be studied by future generations of readers.

Noelene Reeves notes that children's ability to read in the mid-nineteenth century was often 'solely a decoding skill' and did not include the more complex aspects of textual understanding and appreciation expected from children today (173). In the elementary classrooms of the 1840s, many of the children would have struggled even to decode the poetry and scripture passages that confronted them. Teaching strategies of drill, repetition, interrogation, memorisation and recitation were therefore common methods to ensure children's access to the literal meaning of texts and to instil some understanding of the 'truths' they contained.<sup>10</sup> From a contemporary viewpoint, the use of such strategies suggests that instruction at that time was more a form of indoctrination than a legitimate educational learning process (N. Reeves 171).

Joseph Lancaster, for example, valued the practices of repetition, recitation and memorisation for both practical and moral reasons:

Recitation and repetition may be united with emulation in children, when learning hymns, passages of scripture, etc, *even before they can read or tell their letters*. Thus, the monitor should recite [...] distinctly, *line by line* [...] the first boy repeats it deliberately after him; then he recites another verse to the second; and so with all assembled in the division [...]. The success of this is very great; and the impression, made thus early on the memory, hardly ever wears out [...]. The advantage of this method of learning hymns and passages of Scripture, in the saving of books, is great, as none but the monitor need have a book [...]. Six hymn, or other books, will do instead of an hundred, *for boys who can read, as well as for those who cannot*. (159-60)

The memories of youth cannot be too well furnished with the knowledge of the Scriptures. A lad may be trained in the habitual practice of religious duties, and in the daily reading the Sacred Writings; but when he advances to maturity, he may throw off every restraint, and condemn his Bible. But if pious friends have taken early care to make *a Bible of his memory*, that is a

book he can never neglect. It will stick close to him, even in scenes of dissipation, and alarm his conscience in the midst of all his deceitful enjoyments; and, in many instances be attended with the Divine blessing. Many people despise the cultivation of the memory, unconnected with the understanding. However, the memory ripens first, and fails first. Its powers are often blunted before the understanding expands; and whenever the understanding does expand, a memory that has previously been rendered a storehouse for Divine truths, will be found an invaluable appendage to it. (163-4)

These practices and some of Lancaster's justifications for them influenced the teaching of poetry in elementary classrooms for many decades. Particular emphasis was given to the recitation of poetry. Nineteenth-century teaching texts stressed the importance of speaking lines of poetry and biblical passages clearly and correctly. Lancaster believed this skill to be sufficiently important to warrant appropriate punishment for those of his pupils who adopted a 'singing tone' in their oral reading (105). Lindley Murray, the Quaker editor of school readers, prefaced his texts with a passage titled 'Rules and Observations for Assisting Children to Read with Propriety'. This included advice about the reading of verse:

Narrative, didactic, descriptive, and pathetic pieces have the same peculiar tone and manner, in poetry, as in prose. A singing note, and making the lines jingle by laying too great a stress on the rhyming words, should be particularly avoided. A very small pause ought to be made at the end of a line, unless the sense, or some of the usual marks of pause, require a considerable one. The great rule for reading verse as well as prose, is to read slowly, distinctly, and in a natural tone of voice. (*Introduction to English Reader* x-xi)<sup>11</sup>

Although strategies such as repetition, memorisation and appropriate recitation of verse were calculated to instil understanding and appreciation of the 'message' of the verses selected for class reading, the conscientious teacher would no doubt have followed Henry Dunn's advice provided in *Popular Education* (1837).<sup>12</sup> Practices recommended by Dunn aimed to deepen pupils' comprehension of passages and ensure they got 'best value from one page of the reader':

*Do not permit too much to be read at one time.* A good teacher can profitably occupy twenty or thirty minutes over a page, without at all wearying his children. He will often say, 'I perceive you do not understand that passage; read it again.' Then he will require definitions of leading words, their synonyms and their opposites: then perhaps he will have a sentence analysed or paraphrased; and after this he will thoroughly explain every incidental allusion, whether geographical, historical, or biographical [...]. All this, it may be, must be done before that which is read can be thoroughly

understood; and he knows [...] that until it is understood it can never be properly read. (Quoted in Goldstrom 150)

Whether these practices increased pupils' appreciation of what they read is debatable.

The British and Foreign School Society's 1845 catalogue included a folio of 'Watts's Divine Songs' among the list of 'Sheet Lessons available for use in schools' (BFSS *Annual Report* 1845, 178). These 'Songs' comprised a selection of hymns and devotional verse from Watts's *Divine Songs for the use of Children* (1715). Lancaster favoured hymns by Watts and Anna Barbauld and quoted their verses in *Improvements in Education* to illustrate his teaching methods (159-62). His membership of the Society of Friends and that Society's strong influence on the policies and practices of the BFSS guided the choice of hymns and religious verse included in the lesson sheets used in schools before the publication of the *Daily Lesson Books*.<sup>13</sup> In addition to works by Isaac Watts and Anna Barbauld, Lancaster sometimes used verses and hymns by Nathaniel Cotton, Edmund Young and Thomas Parnell.<sup>14</sup>

The titles of some of Watts's poems read in schools in the 1840s indicate their value within the religious and moral ideology of the time. 'The advantages of early religion', 'Acknowledgement of Divine favours', 'Creation and Providence', 'The excellence of the Bible' and 'The Divine Being knows and sees every thing' conveyed powerful messages to young minds.<sup>15</sup> Children learnt of the 'circling pow'r' of God whose 'piercing view' and 'piercing ray' was all-knowing:

My thoughts before they are my own,  
Are to my God distinctly known;  
He knows the words I mean to speak,  
Ere from my op'ning lips they break. ('Divine Being' 230)

The 'sovereign power' of God's 'gaze' ensured that children were under constant supervision and surveillance as they repeated lines such as: 'There's not a place where we can flee, / But God is present there', and 'His hand is my perpetual guard; / He keeps me with his eye' ('Creation and Providence' 202).<sup>16</sup> Children learnt the virtues of acknowledging their sins and accepting 'instruction well' ('Advantages of

early religion' 189). To understand God's law was to be shown their 'faults' and 'draw [p]ardon' for their sins ('Excellence of the Bible' 211):

'Twill save us from a thousand snares  
To mind religion young;  
'Twill preserve our following years,  
And make our virtue strong. ('Advantages of early religion' 189)<sup>17</sup>

Watts's 'An Evening Hymn' (subsequently published in *Daily Lesson Book II*) included the stanza:

But how my childhood runs to waste!  
My sins, how great their sum!  
Lord! give me pardon for the past,  
And strength for days to come. (219)

To experience 'the fruits of life and glory' and to save their souls 'from hell' (211), children had to undertake 'sweet work of pray'r and praise', avoid 'angry passions' (190), 'love working and reading' in order to improve their minds (200), be industrious lest 'Satan finds some mischief still, / For idle hands to do' (212), 'gain a good name by performing [their] duty', not be proud of their youth or beauty (216), 'read in good books', 'believe and obey' (218), love their enemies (229), and sing their 'Maker's praise' and rejoice in his love (219).<sup>18</sup>

Eagleton's point that religion was an 'extremely effective form of ideological control' in Victorian society is even more pertinent when applied to the society of the school (23). The themes and language of the verse and prose taught supported a system of managing classes by conveying concepts of obedience, submission to current circumstances and diligent application to tasks. Attributes of God such as His all-seeing eye, and the certainty of the mercy and favours bestowed on those who obeyed His Word, could with equal force be qualities assumed by masters in schools. And, as practised in the liturgies of the church, rituals of the classroom such as reciting, memorising and chanting verse inculcated these ideas constantly and systematically.

Bartle points out that the publication of the Society's *Daily Lesson Books* in the early 1840s marked a significant development in the reading available for schools, because they included non-scriptural and secular material (27). This change occurred only after some years of debate within the Society and represented a dramatic

development in the nature of the poetry taught in classrooms in the nineteenth century. Pupils in schools conducted by the Society were given access to poems dealing with topics such as the natural world and their country's history, and to a wider range of writers. Some religious poetry continued to hold a place in BFSS readers, however, and the secular poetry selected for the readers often conveyed moral themes relating to personal and social behaviour. Examples of this secular poetry included in *Daily Lesson Books I and II* were Colley Cibber's 'The Blind Boy', Mary Howitt's 'The Spider and the Fly', John Langhorne's 'To a Redbreast' and Ann Taylor's 'My Mother'.<sup>19</sup>

The first of the *Daily Lesson Books* produced by the Society was *Lesson Book III*, published in 1840.<sup>20</sup> This was reprinted in Hobart for the use of 'the Van Diemen's Land Public Day Schools' in 1849 (Fig.1). *Lesson Book III* contained 75 daily lessons to be taught during the week, and 14 additional 'Simultaneous Lessons' that provided teachers with 'familiar and colloquial lecture' notes and 'recapitulatory exercises' to be taught on Saturdays (4). The book's contents page listed the daily lessons under six headings titled 'Moral and Religious', 'England, etc', 'Foreign Parts', 'Natural History', 'Political Economy, etc' and 'Health, etc'. Each daily lesson comprised three sections: a biblical text from the Book of Proverbs, a poem or extract from a poem, and a prose reading. These three passages sometimes had a common theme. The text for the first Monday, for example, which stated that 'fools despise wisdom and instruction', was followed by Lydia Sigourney's poem 'The School' and a passage from Abercrombie's 'Improvement of the Mind' (8-9). This lesson material was more highly structured than that in other readers discussed in this chapter, and no other readers included the reading of poetry as part of every weekday lesson (Fig. 2).

Because a poem was included in each of the weekday lessons, the BFSS *Daily Lesson Book* contained a much higher ratio of poetry to prose than that found in other class readers considered in this study. When the brief prose extracts illustrating the 14 'Simultaneous Lessons' are considered together with the daily lessons, poetry represented 42% of the book's lessons.<sup>21</sup> Table 1 lists the poets and their poems in *Daily Lesson Book III*. Four of the 75 poems were anonymous or unattributed and 68 were the works of 34 poets. Eleven of the poets were represented by at least 2 poems.

# DAILY LESSON BOOK,

FOR THE USE OF

SCHOOLS AND FAMILIES.

No. III.

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JOINT EDITORS,

MR. HENRY DUNN,

AUTHOR OF "THE NORMAL SCHOOL MANUAL," &c. &c.

MR. JOHN THOMAS CROSSLEY,

JOINT AUTHOR OF "THE INTELLECTUAL CALCULATOR,"

&c. &c.

HOBART TOWN:

REPRINTED FOR

THE VAN DIEMEN'S LAND PUBLIC DAY SCHOOLS.

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1849.

Fig. 1. Title page. BFSS *Daily Lesson Book III* 1849

8 DAILY READING LESSON—MONDAY.

TEXT FOR THE DAY.—Prov. i. 7.—“*The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge; but fools despise wisdom and instruction.*”

THE SCHOOL.

“Group after group are gathering. Such as press’d  
Once to their Saviour’s arms, and gently laid  
Their cherub heads upon his shielding breast,  
Though sterner souls their fond approach forbade;—  
Group after group glide on with noiseless tread,  
And round the accustom’d spot with pleasure meet,  
Where holy thoughts in infant hearts are bred,  
And holy words their ruby lips repeat  
Off with a chasten’d glance in modulation sweet.”  
MRS. SIGOURNEY.

IMPROVEMENT OF THE MIND.

“In the cultivation of the mental powers in the young, a point of essential importance is the selection of proper and worthy objects of acquirement.

The great object to be kept in view from the very earliest period, is the importance of being well acquainted with subjects of real utility; the actual cultivation of habits of observation, inquiry, association, and induction; and, as the foundation of the whole, the habit of steady and continued attention.

The cultivation of these mental habits is of greater value by far than any one acquirement whatever; for they are the basis of all future improvement, and are calculated to give a tone to the whole character.

SUBJECT. *Children entering school*, CIR. in groups—noiseless—with pleasure.

ANALYSIS. *Group*, DIS. crowd, host, &c. *Cherub*, i.e. fullness of knowledge, see Exo. x. 20. *Cherubim plu. ssn.* Innocent and lovely. *shielding*, FIG. shield, BXP. vide Gen. xv. 1; Ps. v. 12. *Stern*, AL. Matt. xix. 13. *glide*, DIS. slide—slip. *holy*, SEN. consecrate (to religion and virtue). *ruby*, AL. stone. *chasten’d*, SEN. subdued (by seriousness), DIS. chastisement.

LESSON I. Great object of school instruction to store the memory with truth, and to train the mind to think aright. II. Christ’s willingness to receive little ones.

The most common and trivial occurrences may thus be made the source of mental improvement: as the habits of animals; the natural history of the articles that are constantly before us, in clothes, food, furniture; articles of manufacture, from a watch to a pin; the action of the mechanic powers, as illustrated by various contrivances in constant use; the structure of a leaf, a flower, a tree.

To those farther advanced, a constant source of interest may be found in history, geography, and memoirs of eminent individuals; and in the leading principles of natural history, natural philosophy, and chemistry.

Every new subject of thought which is thus presented to the mind, is both valuable in itself by the powers which it calls into action, and by proving a nucleus to which new facts may be afterwards associated.

In the concerns which relate to man as a moral being, this active, inquiring, and reflective habit of mind is not less applicable than in matters of inferior moment.

The man who cultivates it is more likely to direct his attention intensely and eagerly to the great truths which belong to his moral condition, to seek to estimate distinctly his relation to them, and to feel their influence upon his moral principles, than he who is under the influence of listlessness or inactivity.”—  
ADERCROMBIE.

SUBJECT. *How we may improve our minds*. 1. By selecting suitable objects of study. 2. By the cultivation of good mental habits.

ANALYSIS. *Cultivation*, RT. *mental powers*, DIS. bodily, BXP. perception—memory—comparison. *essential*, DIS. desirable. *acquirement*, RT. *observation*, IL. natural history, astronomy, p. 18. *Inquiry*, i.e. in books, and of well-informed persons. *association*, RT. IL. pain with fire, pictures, &c., p. 18. *induction*, RT. i.e. forming a general rule from a number of facts. IL. roundness of the earth—1. by shadow on moon. 2. sailing about it. 2. vessel approaching. *habit*, RT. attention, p. 18. *basis*, i.e. foundation. *tone*, FIG. harmony and vigour, IL. *habits of animals*, IL. bee and beaver. *articles*, IL. cotton, sugar, earthenware. *manufacture*, RT. *mechanic powers*, BXP. six. *contrivance*, IL. pump, &c. *structure*, RT. *nucleus*, i.e. kernel, FIG. *moral being*, i.e. conscience and responsibility. *reflective*, RT. SEN. compare, judge. *moral principles*, SEN. truth, fidelity, honesty, rule—Bible.

LESSON I. Importance of improving our faculties. II. Thankfulness that the means of doing so are thickly scattered around and open to all.

B

Poems by William Cowper dominated the collection, while James Montgomery and the Americans William Bryant and Nathaniel Willis were each represented by 5 poems.<sup>22</sup> Only 8 of the poems in this *Lesson Book* appeared in other readers surveyed in this study, but 20 of the poets were represented in at least some school readers for the remainder of the century and so formed the basis of a canon of poets read in Tasmanian classrooms.

Eight of the poems focussed entirely on religious subjects similar to those included in Joseph Lancaster's lesson sheets. G.D. Abbott's 'Sabbath Bell' and George Crabbe's 'Prayer' remind readers to 'think on Him whose eye surveys, / Whose hand is over all your ways' (116). Poems by Richard Dana and James Edmeston emphasise the importance of salvation in order to 'rest secure' in the Saviour's 'legacy of love' (20) and experience God's 'creating power' (80). For Wordsworth, this salvation is the 'glorious light' not to be experienced by anyone 'who grovels, self-debarr'd / From all that lies within the scope / Of holy faith and Christian hope' (56). Cowper's Christian peasant is humble and poor with 'little understanding, and no wit', but knows 'her Bible true' and learns from that of her 'title to a treasure in the skies' (22).

More than half of the 75 poems dealt with issues of personal and social behaviour. Some emphasised the importance of work and application within the context of time which 'speeds away ... / Then plunges in the fearful sea / Of fathomless eternity' (24). Not to use time wisely is to leave 'a dreary waste behind' (84), a point illustrated in Hannah Gould's 'Song of the Bees' where early rising and purposeful activity provide

For the winter of life without lament  
That summer is gone with its hours misspent,  
And the harvest is past recall. (12)

To undertake 'some work of high and holy love' is compared to 'an angel's happiness' (140) and an eagle's flight 'Onward and upward, true to the line!' (38). Being true to this 'line' requires 'the vigorous joys of health' with the body 'unclogg'd' and the mind 'unobscured' (48). In an extract titled 'Exercise', James Thomson equates health to the profitable use of time in work and exercise:

Behold the wretch who flings his life away,  
Soon swallow'd in disease's sad abyss;



While he whom toil has braced, or manly play,  
Has light as air each limb, each thought as clear as day. (156)

Being 'true to the line' also means being truthful and modest:

So long as you your crime conceal,  
You cannot light and gladsome feel;  
Your little heart will seem oppress'd,  
As if a weight were on your breast;  
And e'en your mother's eye to meet  
Will tinge your face with shame and heat. ('The Truth' 44)

Extracts from Wordsworth and Cowper instruct children that pride 'Howe'er disguised in its own majesty, / Is littleness' (68), and that they must be of 'modest mien' and 'shine [-] without desiring to be seen' (104).

The anonymous 'Who is My Neighbour' (40), Coleridge's lines on friendship (130), Portia's speech on mercy from *The Merchant of Venice* (50) and Thomas Moore's poem 'Dissension' (178) link with several of the poems referred to above to emphasise appropriate social relationships. Similar themes are conveyed in poems about birds and animals. The stork in James Montgomery's 'Conversation with the Birds' claims that the human virtues he possesses include being kind to his offspring, faithful to his partner and 'duteous' to his parents (62). These poems can refer to desirable human qualities while also urging respect for creatures of the animal world, a theme that featured frequently in writing directed at children, and was a particular concern of philanthropists at that time.<sup>23</sup> Thomas Gisborne's 'The Worm' (100), Cowper's 'Cruelty to Animals' (128) and Joseph Cottle's 'Robin Redbreast' (182) urge children to provide these creatures with a 'portion' of God's 'boundless love' (100). Cottle's poem refers to the robin's 'faithful' friendship, a subject that Samuel Rogers explores with pathos and relates to human circumstances in his poem 'The Dog':

Hence learn fidelity: – with grateful mind  
Repay the courteous, to your friends be kind:  
Whatever fortune on your life attend,  
The best of treasures is a faithful friend. (170)

As subjects, birds and the beauties of nature could convey Christian messages. Migrating birds remind Felicia Hemans of the need for a 'guide' who will ensure that 'we reach our bright home at last' (94), and Nathaniel Willis's list of the 'beautiful

and well-created things' around him points to 'God's deep wisdom in the natural world' (98).

Two subjects given only minor attention in the poetry of the BFSS *Daily Lesson Book III*, but which increased in importance in subsequent readers, are patriotism and the celebration of nature. Cowper's 'Ancient Britons' (10) and 'England' (180) champion the 'hardy' and 'fearless' qualities of the country's early inhabitants and their success against the 'blast' and 'howlings' of foreign invaders. The verses from William Bryant's 'Pitcairn's Island' praise the husband's home across the seas. Given the subjects favoured in most of the nineteenth-century readers, however, some of the nature poems included in the *Lesson Book III* are exceptional in that they describe features of the natural world with no didactic intent. Poems by Dana (16) and David Brainerd (86) celebrate aspects of the life of the sea, while Bryant's 'The Wood', with its 'musical' birds, chirping squirrel, dancing insects and 'leaping' rivulet, simply 'Seems with continuous laughter to rejoice / In its own being' (32). John Milton describes the beauties of 'the breath of morn' and the 'sweet coming on / Of grateful evening mild' (58). Such purely descriptive tributes to nature did not appear regularly in classroom readers until near the end of the century. These poems, however, were the exception in a lesson book designed to 'improve the mind and character of the reader' ('preface' 3). More representative of the majority of poems was Carlos Wilcox's 'Way to be Happy' with its emphasis on the rewards resulting from good and holy work:

Rouse to some work of high and holy love,  
And thou an angel's happiness shalt know, –  
Shalt bless the earth while in the world above;  
The good begun by thee shall onward flow  
In many a branching stream, and wider grow;  
The seed that, in these few and fleeting hours,  
Thy hands unsparing and unwearied sow,  
Shall deck thy grave with amaranthine flowers,  
And yield thee fruits divine in heaven's immortal bowers. (140)

Wilcox's use of gardening imagery would have appealed particularly to one of the book's editors, Henry Dunn. In *Popular Education*, Dunn employed similar imagery to present his ideas about educating the young, to 'turn up the yet unbroken soil, and to sow the first seeds' (15), and, in later years, to foster the 'cultivation' of 'a taste for the kind, and the good, and the beautiful' (169). Joseph Lancaster also wrote of

the 'propagation' of the 'fruits of Christianity' which would result in 'improved principles and conduct' of society and the 'steadiness and amiable disposition of parents, masters and children' (ix). And in Van Diemen's Land, Governor Franklin relied on a similar image in his address to the Legislative Council about the proposed College to be conducted by Mr Gell in 1840:

Moral, like material gardening, carefully and skilfully pursued, will bring forth fruits even on a rugged soil, and under an ungenial clime; and whatever be the unfavourable influences against which we have to contend [...] they will yield to that great instrument of moral culture which is now put into our hands. (*LCP* 1837-42, 180)

As Peggy Mares demonstrates, such horticultural images relating to 'growth' have been a constant in the rhetoric and practice of English teaching in the twentieth century (7-8). The meaning and purpose of these images have changed over time, of course, according to developments in curriculum content and teaching methodologies. Some of these developments occurred in Van Diemen's Land schools in the 1850s when the *Irish Readers* replaced the BFSS *Daily Lesson Books* as the official reading materials for use in schools. The secular literature included in the *Irish Readers* indicated the changes in the nature of poetry taught in elementary classrooms, but maintained an emphasis on didactic verse of high moral purpose.

### **The *Irish Readers***

Thomas Arnold was appointed Inspector of Schools in Van Diemen's Land at the beginning of 1850 and presented his first report on the colony's schools to the Legislative Council at the end of that year. Arnold noted that 71 Public Day Schools were operating, 59 conducted by the Church of England, 4 by the Church of Rome and only 8 'still conducted, as under the Board [of Education], on the principles of the British and Foreign School Society' ('Report' 2). Arnold's inspection reports on individual schools, however, identified 12 schools conducted according to BFSS principles and presumably using the society's lesson material. The Society's *Daily Lesson Books* continued in use in some schools during Arnold's period as Inspector of Schools, as indicated in his letter of 25 May 1850 seeking authority for the Government printer to print 500 copies of *Daily Lesson Book IV* (BoE 'Letterbook'). An order placed in 1858 for 400 copies of *Daily Lesson Book II* indicates that schools used BFSS materials following Arnold's departure from the Colony (BoE

‘Letterbook’ 70). And their listing on a requisition form sent to schools in 1863 shows that the *Daily Lesson Books* were still read in classrooms during that decade (BoE ‘Circulars’ 15).

In his first report, Arnold commented on school enrolments, building and property matters, pupil discipline, the range of subjects taught and the standards achieved in reading, writing and arithmetic. He found that these three subjects were ‘tolerably well taught’ in most of the schools (5). The only other subjects mentioned in his reports on individual schools were geography, taught with varying degrees of success in 18 schools, and singing, spelling and grammar taught in one or two schools. In the majority of schools, education was basic and functional. Children had little, if any, contact with poetry, except those poems included in the reading books. Arnold mentioned the use of a specific reading book in only one school, the Sandy Bay Church of England School. This was *No 3 Lesson Book of the Irish Readers*.

Arnold also referred to some of the changes in the management of the colony’s schools resulting from recommendations made by the British Secretary of State (Mr Gladstone) during the 1840s. These changes had been prompted by the continuing disputes between the Governor of the day and church leaders about the nature and control of schooling in the colony (2).<sup>24</sup> One of the Secretary of State’s recommendations that Arnold did not mention was Gladstone’s instruction to the previous Governor ‘to examine the Irish National System of education’ (Phillips 21).

The National System of Education was introduced in Ireland by the British Government in the early 1830s and supervised by a Board of Commissioners to ensure that schools provided ‘moral and literary and separate religious education’. The Commissioners produced and prescribed ‘moral and literary school-books’ for class use and appointed inspectors to monitor standards and report regularly on school performance (Goldstrom 82). The most important of these texts were the class readers, variously titled *Books of Lessons* or *Reading Books*.<sup>25</sup> The contents of these were deliberately non-sectarian; doctrinal religious education was taught separately at appointed times during the week. Classroom teachers were responsible for secular studies and general moral education acceptable to all faiths.

The *Irish Readers* consisted of five graded readers, and a special *Sequel to the Second Reader*, prepared because of the degree of difficulty apparent between the second and third readers. The commissioners also produced class books addressing specific areas of the curriculum. Four of these related to poetry: *Sacred Poetry* (1837), *Selections from British Poets* (1849), *Biographical Sketches of British Poets* (1849) and a text for teachers, *An Introduction to the Art of Reading* (1837).

Akenson describes the graded readers as ‘probably the best set of school books’ produced at that time in both content and price, and notes that requests for them came from ‘more than a dozen countries, in addition to Scotland and England’ (229). The *First Reader* taught the alphabet and simple words and sentences, but the other readers included lessons on a variety of subjects including history, geography, grammar, natural history, science, commerce, non-doctrinal biblical history and material promoting moral and ethical behaviour.<sup>26</sup> In general, the content of the material in the *Irish Readers* paralleled that of the BFSS *Daily Lesson Books*. Apart from arithmetic, this lesson material comprised the basic, and in many cases, the entire curriculum taught in elementary schools.

Arnold promoted the use of the *Irish Readers* early in his first year as Inspector of Schools, and arranged for copies to be obtained from England (BoE ‘Letterbook’ 11 April 1850). In May 1850, he requested the Government Printer to reproduce fifteen hundred copies of the *Third Reader*, and discussed the relative merits of either obtaining multiple copies of the readers from England or reproducing them locally (BoE ‘Letterbook’ 25 May, and 5 September, 1850). Although a number of schools continued to use the BFSS *Daily Lesson Books* for some years, at the end of Arnold’s term of office in the colony, the *Irish Readers* were the established textbooks in the majority of elementary schools. The Board of Education’s 1858 requisition order included two thousand copies of the *First Reader*, twelve hundred of the *Second Reader* and between four hundred and six hundred copies of the *Sequel to the Second Reader*, the *Third* and *Fourth Readers* and the Commission’s text *Sacred Poetry*. The order also included fifty copies of *Introduction to the art of Reading* and the two volumes of *Selections from the British Poets* (BoE ‘Letterbook’ 70).<sup>27</sup>

The contents of all the readers, except the first, were arranged in separate lessons on specific subjects. The lessons in the *Second Reader* were divided into several sections, graded in sequence to teach children to read words of two, three and four syllables. Subsequent readers continued the emphasis on reading, pronunciation and spelling, but extended the lesson material to incorporate a greater variety of informative material. Lessons in the *Sequel to the Second Reader* covered topics relating to geography, history and nature study. The *Third Reader's* material was arranged under five headings: 'Fables', 'Natural History', 'Religious and Moral Lessons', 'Geography' and 'Miscellaneous Lessons'. The *Fourth* and *Fifth Readers* continued this arrangement with increasingly complex subject headings such as 'Political Economy' and 'Natural Philosophy'. All the readers included poetry in their contents. Apart from the *Fifth Reader*, where the poetry was placed in a separate section of the text titled 'Poetical Pieces', the poems were incorporated in lessons on particular topics, or were separate lessons in themselves. The first requirement of the 14 poems in the *Second Reader* was to match the levels of vocabulary being taught. Most of the poems in the subsequent readers illustrated and amplified particular lesson material.

Akenson's comprehensive list of the Commissioners' school publications from 1831 to 1870 shows that the five readers were revised at least once during this period, usually by different editors (231). An examination of a sample of the five readers and three different editions of the *Third Reader* used in Van Diemen's Land schools during the period from 1850 to 1880 provides evidence of the amount of poetry included in each reader, the poets represented, the thematic content of the poems and the use made of these works in the classroom.<sup>28</sup>

All the *Irish Readers* contained fewer poems than those included in the BFSS *Third Book of Lessons*. Table 2 shows that the percentage of poetry included in each *Irish Reader* and in the three editions of the *Third Reader* varied considerably. The variation no doubt reflected the personal preferences of the editors of the different books. Richard Whately, for example, who edited the 1851 *Sequel to Second Reader* and the edition of the *Third Reader* published in the same year, obviously placed more emphasis on prose lessons. So too did James Carlile who edited the 1850 edition of the *Second Reader* and the 1849 edition of the *Fourth Reader*. Poetry

received less attention in the *Sequel to the Second Reader* where the emphasis was on accessible vocabulary and factual subjects, such as the discovery of America, geography and zoology, in order to 'bridge' the marked difference in standards between the second and third readers. The 1845 edition of the *Third Reader* was the only reader edited by William McDermott who in comparison gave relatively high priority to the inclusion of poetry. As demonstrated below, the significant amount of poetry included in the 1878 edition of this reader was due to the editor's preference for the work of one Irish poet.

There were 143 poems included in the sample of *Irish Readers*, not including the same poems that were used in one or more of the editions of the *Third Reader*. Works of the poets most favoured by the editors of the BFSS lesson sheets and *Daily Lesson Books* were less prominent in the *Irish Readers*. An obvious example of this change was the omission of Isaac Watts's hymns, although his poems 'The Sluggard', 'Against Quarrelling and Fighting' and 'On Industry' were retained. Thirty-eight of these poems were either anonymous or their authors were not identified. The remaining 105 poems represented the work of 52 poets, 34 of whom had only a single poem included in the readers.

As shown in Table 3, 9 of these 34 poets and 3 of their poems had been included in the BFSS *Lesson Book III*. Almost half of these 34 poets were well-known and respected writers at the time of the reader's publication, but the reputations of most declined quickly later in the century. Among this group, only Joseph Addison, Oliver Goldsmith, James Hogg and Robert Southey maintained a presence in the evolving canon of poetry selected for Tasmanian school readers in future years, but then only for relatively short periods. The works of the remainder, almost without exception, did not feature in the poetry curriculum of Tasmania's classrooms when the *Irish Readers* were replaced with *Australian Readers*. Of the 7 women in this group, Clara Balfour, Anna Barbauld, Lydia Sigourney and Amelia Opie, wrote and published verse for young people. Lydia Sigourney, Hannah Gould and William Bryant were American poets, examples of whose works were published in British poetry annuals between 1820 and 1850 (Boyle 42, 105, 265).

Table 4 lists the 18 poets with at least 2 poems included in the sample of *Irish Readers*. William Cowper (12 poems), Thomas Moore (11), Thomas Campbell (6), Shakespeare (6) and James Montgomery (5) were the writers most frequently represented. Given that the readers were used in schools throughout Great Britain, it is understandable that among the 5 poets were writers of Irish, Scottish and English birth. Cowper, however, was the only one of these poets with works included in each of the third, fourth and fifth readers. Thomas Moore's poems were restricted entirely to the 1878 edition of the *Third Reader*, a fact which suggests that the editor (William McCreedy) made a deliberate attempt to feature Irish poetry in that edition. Shakespeare's work was also restricted to the *Fifth Reader* where the poetry and prose extracts were more demanding in both content and language. Works by only two women featured more than once. At that time, both Felicia Hemans and Mary Howitt were popular writers for both adults and children (Quayle 120). Compared with Bryant, Gould and Sigourney, H.W. Longfellow was the one American poet whose poems were read and studied in Tasmanian classrooms for at least the next century. Of the group listed in Table 4, only Cowper, Campbell and Shakespeare enjoyed similar longevity. Among the less frequently represented writers in this sample of readers, Walter Scott, William Wordsworth and John Milton increased in popularity in subsequent years.

In his analysis of the content of school readers used in British schools in the nineteenth century, Goldstrom identified five major subjects:

1. Christian instruction (This will be taken to mean theological instruction only – if it were taken in a wider sense the objects of classification would be defeated. Even so, there is some unavoidable overlapping with point 5.)
2. the class structure
3. domestic and vocational training
4. the outside world
5. good and bad conduct. (7)

Much of Goldstrom's analysis focusses on the prose passages that include factual information, descriptive material, biblical history and 'earnest' writings about appropriate conduct. Poetry serves more limited, but equally significant purposes. Many of the poems in the *Irish Readers* continued the BFSS focus on religious themes. They encouraged Christian worship and inducted children into their role as Christians, so providing them with a particular view of the world and their place



within it. A minority of poems conveyed moral principles without direct reference to religion, but in such instances their moral and ethical content matched closely the Christian behaviour espoused in the religious verse. In the junior readers, these poems were often anonymous pieces, simple in vocabulary with straightforward didactic themes of worship and behaviour.<sup>29</sup> In the middle years, similar themes were conveyed also by means of verse fables. Some poems in the first four readers were chosen to reinforce and amplify lesson material on geography, history and science topics, thus poetry was used to match thematic lesson content, a practice adopted in the BFSS *Daily Lesson Book III* and which has continued until the present. Only one or two poems in the *Fifth Reader* appear to have been selected purely for pleasure or literary value. Many poems reflected the 'purposeful, propagandistic' tenor of much Victorian literature and the 'moral zeal' of the educators of that time (Buckley 3, 119).

The majority of poems in the *Second Reader* and its *Sequel* were either anonymous or unattributed. Four poems illustrated associated prose lessons about the natural world. 'The Sheep' describes the woollen garment-making process from the stages of sheep dipping, shearing, wool spinning, to clothing design and manufacture. 'Signs of Rain' identifies natural phenomena that herald approaching rain. 'The Sheep' and Howitt's 'The Camel' emphasise the usefulness of animals to man: 'Thou was made for usefulness, / Man to comfort and to bless' (*Sequel* 196). Wordsworth's 'To the Cuckoo' adds a Romantic dimension to this usefulness. For the poet, the bird is the 'darling of the Spring' and 'an invisible thing, / A voice, a mystery' that recalls the 'golden time' of childhood (*Sequel* 155). The nostalgic quality of this poem becomes more prevalent in the poetry included in the more advanced readers.

Most of the poems conveyed themes of ethical conduct or religious obedience and reward. Langhorne's 'To a Redbreast' (previously included in BFSS *Daily Lesson Book II*) together with 'The Voice of Spring' and 'The Field Daisy' were the least overtly didactic, describing features of nature and encouraging children to celebrate and respect the world in which they lived. 'The coot seated on its nest' combines a lively narrative and catalogue of bird life with a message of Divine care. More favoured were poems such as 'Love Between Brothers and Sisters' (also included in BFSS *Daily Lesson Book II*) and 'The Little Ant' that convey behavioural messages:

Whatever brawls disturb the street,  
There should be peace at home;  
Where sisters dwell, and brothers meet  
Quarrels should never come. (2<sup>nd</sup> R. 84)

And the good-natured ant who assisted his brother,  
May teach those, who choose to be taught,  
That if little insects are kind to each other,  
All children most certainly ought. (2<sup>nd</sup> R. 99)

'My Mother' and 'The Young Mouse' promote respectful obedience towards parents and elders, the latter concluding with the moral: 'Let the young people mind what the old people say, / And when danger is near them, keep out of the way' (2<sup>nd</sup> R. 91).

'We must not be idle', 'The Little Lark' and 'The Ant or Emmet' promote the need to 'improve each shining hour / In works of labour or of skill' and not waste time 'in sleeping and play':

Let me read in good books, and believe and obey  
So I may dwell in a place in Heaven. (2<sup>nd</sup> R. 145)

The recitation of poems written from the first person point of view increased their didactic impact. Children promised to 'pray / Both night and day' and acknowledged that to 'Live with Thee above the sky', they would need to desist from thieving, harming others, or being 'rude and wild' (2<sup>nd</sup> R. 55). In 'Our Father who art in Heaven' they asked God to 'condescend / To be my father and my friend' and promised to 'try, in word, and deed, and thought, / To serve and please thee as I ought' in order to gain an appropriate reward:

When all my days on earth are past,  
Send down and take me in thy love,  
To be a better child above. (2<sup>nd</sup> R. 178)

And the *Sequel*'s final poem acknowledged the cost of this reward:

To be religious something it will cost,  
Some riches, honours, pleasures, will be lost;  
But if thou countest the sum total o'er  
Not to be so will cost a great deal more. (*Sequel* 220)

Patriotism was encouraged in similar manner, as children recited 'God bless our native land', praying that 'heaven's protecting hand' would 'guard our shore' (*Sequel* 178).

Almost half the poems in the *Third* and *Fourth Readers* were religious, conveying themes similar to those included in the BFSS *Daily Lesson Book III*. Many focussed on the power of God and the ultimate comfort that He would bring, despite life's difficulties. These poems served to induct children into the particular diction and imagery of the popular Christian discourse of the time. Poems illustrating Old Testament history portrayed God as a conquering hero and an 'awful guide in smoke and flame' (3<sup>rd</sup> R. 109). Similar attributes were couched in milder terms. The poem 'Omnipresence of God' describes His 'wondrous power [...], guiding finger' and 'living shadow' found in 'every sphere' (4<sup>th</sup> R. 30). He is a mighty and present power, a 'soul in all things' (4<sup>th</sup> R. 48) and 'Judge of all mankind' (4<sup>th</sup> R. 201).

These poems pictured human existence as troubled and dangerous, using symbols of sea and land journeys to emphasise these conditions. Cowper writes of humans 'Bound on a voyage of awful length, / And dangers little known' (3<sup>rd</sup> R. 227), and the writer of 'The Heavenly Rest' describes 'life's tempestuous shoals / Where storms arise, and ocean rolls' (4<sup>th</sup> R. 200). One writer refers to life as a 'gloomy track' (3<sup>rd</sup> R. 170), and James Montgomery describes it as a 'perplexing path' through a 'wilderness' of 'serpent, plague, and hostile rage' (3<sup>rd</sup> R. 110). Writers suggest that the outcomes of such journeys will depend on the faith and trust of the travellers who must accept difficulties and affliction with 'contrite heart' and 'humble thought' (3<sup>rd</sup> R. 110), not complaining of sorrows (3<sup>rd</sup> R. 164) and avoiding the temptations of 'vice', 'passion' and 'pleasure' (3<sup>rd</sup> R. 227). Only by facing life's challenges bravely will man be able to 'Plunge through the stream, to rise above' (3<sup>rd</sup> R. 111). Reginald Heber's 'Christ's Second Coming' affirms this hope and promises that Christ will help the 'poor and needy' and give strength to the weak by dispensing 'justice, mercy, truth' (4<sup>th</sup> R. 198, 199). Children learnt that God's purposes 'will ripen fast, / Unfolding every hour':

The bud may have a bitter taste,  
But sweet will be the flower. (4<sup>th</sup> R. 286)

The reward will be 'that blest port of endless rest, / Where storms shall never come' (3<sup>rd</sup> R. 223).

Grahame's 'The Day of Rest' illustrates that the religious poetry in the readers, and in Victorian times generally, was often directed to those less favoured in society, and

presented a covenant of hope against the reality of oppressed lives. Grahame describes the 'hallow'd day' of the Sabbath as 'the poor man's day', when he rests from hard labour and 'shares the frugal meal with those he loves' and gives thanks to God 'reverently, / With cover'd face, and upward, earnest eye'. The man's hope is that 'Heaven may be one Sabbath without end' (4<sup>th</sup> R. 285).

Eight fables and 2 poems by Isaac Watts in these readers taught pupils those moral values preached vigorously by the Methodist Evangelicals of the time. 'The Chameleon' and Merrick's 'The Bears and the Bees' warn against boastful behaviour and greed, qualities described as 'the gilded baits of vice' (3<sup>rd</sup> R.17). Wilkie's 'The Boy and the Rainbow' and Watts's 'The Sluggard' demonstrate the futility of seeking easy wealth without effort. Cowper's 'The Nightingale and the Glow-worm' is directed at sectarian strife. The relationship between the bird and the worm proves that 'jarring sectaries' who 'worry and devour each other' should 'sing and shine by sweet consent' (3<sup>rd</sup> R. 43). John Gay's 'The Hare and Many Friends' and 'The Butterfly and the Snail', together with 'A Fable' in the *Fourth Reader*, show that 'All upstarts, insolent in place, / Remind us of their vulgar race' (3<sup>rd</sup> R. 62) and that 'Friendship, like love, is but a name, / Unless to one you stint the flame' (3<sup>rd</sup> R. 29).

Only a minority of poems focussed purely on secular lesson material. Extracts from poems by James Hurdis, Milton and Cowper amplified natural history lessons with descriptions of insect and sea life.<sup>30</sup> Two extracts from Cowper's *The Task* stressed the need to respect animals and protect the 'economy of Nature's realm' (4<sup>th</sup> R. 51). Barbauld's 'The Laplander' and Montgomery's 'A Voyage Round the World' illustrated geography lessons, the latter, after brief descriptions of an extensive list of countries, concluding with the lines:

Britain, thou'rt my home, my rest  
My own land, I love *thee* best. (4<sup>th</sup> R. 161)

Similar patriotic sentiments were conveyed in Hemans's 'The Homes of England', James Gray's 'Scotland', Scott's 'Love of Country', Cowper's 'Selkirk' and extracts from Goldsmith's *The Deserted Village* which celebrated the virtues of aspects of life in Britain, qualities that were sometimes linked to a Christian god. Hemans praises the 'filial band' bound by a commitment to their native land:

To guard each hallowed wall!

And green for ever be the groves,  
And bright the flowery sod,  
Where first the child's glad spirit loves  
Its country and its God. (3<sup>rd</sup> R. 179)

And Gray, while extolling the virtues of Scotland above all countries, avers that he will seek another shore and 'return no more' should his native land desert the Christian faith (3<sup>rd</sup> R. 184).

The lesson material in the *Fifth Reader* extended the established subject areas of history, geography and nature study to include geology, astronomy, chemistry, optics, electricity and topics such as hydrostatics and pneumatics. This emphasis on a factual knowledge of the world and the mechanics of its operation replaced units of study on biblical history and religious and moral lessons that featured prominently in earlier readers. The new emphasis reflected the Irish Commissioners' aim to provide practical and vocational education, and also contemporary concerns about the need to include the sciences in a curriculum dominated by the classics (Mathieson 20). The *Fifth Reader* grouped all the poetry in a separate section of the text and there was no apparent attempt to link individual poems to specific prose lessons. Many of these poems were more substantial in length and more complex in language and form. Akenson's claim that a student who finished reading the contents of the *Fifth Reader* 'was able to read most books in the English language' is certainly sustained when applied to its poetry (233). Two-thirds of the poems were in continuous verse and the majority of these were the blank verse of Shakespeare and Milton. There were no narrative poems in the reader, and the sonnet form was included for the first time. Only Bryant's 'To a Waterfowl' was in the traditional quatrain form, but this contained a patterned variety of line length ranging from three to five metrical feet. More complex stylistic qualities including the use of invocation, pathetic fallacy, personification and extended imagery illustrate Klingopulos's description of Victorian poetry as being 'extremely poetic in a professional sort of way' (73).

Sigourney's 'The Coral Insect', Campbell's 'Gertrude of Wyoming' and Scott's 'The Last Minstrel' were the only poems with any apparent relationship to the lessons on physiology, geography and history. Eight poems were specifically religious in subject and theme. The unattributed 'Lines Written in a Severe Frost and Strong

Haze, on Sunday Morning' was similar to themes and imagery prominent in the BFSS *Daily Lesson Books*. It describes earthly life as 'transient' and a 'probationary state' supervised by God's 'all-seeing [and] all-searching eye', which knows man's 'inmost thoughts' (5<sup>th</sup> R. 394). Other poems extolled the virtues of patience and acceptance of life's vicissitudes. In 'Benefits of Affliction', Cowper asserts that only the 'path of sorrow' leads the way 'to the land where sorrow is unknown'. The 'thorns and briers' confronted on this path, rather than a 'life of ease' and 'heedless' pleasure, lead to 'the fount of grace above'. Here 'ills of every shape, and every name' will be transformed to 'blessings', and the 'chief Shepherd' is ever near those 'cast / Far from the flock, and in a boundless waste!' (5<sup>th</sup> R. 379). 'Many are the sayings of the wise' and Milton's 'On His Blindness' propose that patience and acceptance can be borne only with God's support. 'Extolling patience as the truest fortitude; / And to the bearing well of all calamities' means little without 'Some source of consolation from above' (5<sup>th</sup> R. 386).

Both Milton and the blind mother in the poem of that title accept their affliction, believing that with 'but one sense the mind may overflow' (5<sup>th</sup> R. 406). Pollock's 'True Liberty' relates this state of acceptance to the 'Graces' of 'Meekness, Holiness, and Love' and defines it within the context of a Saviour who, 'with strong integrity', rejected the 'flowery bed' of sin; freedom is to be found in the 'liberty of God', not in material possessions, or 'Fancy' and Temptations' (5<sup>th</sup> R. 376). In 'Christian Benevolence', one stanza of which had been included in the BFSS *Daily Lesson Book III*, Wilcox combines images of light and growth to emphasise that effort and work are necessary to achieve the 'high or humble enterprise of good' which should be the reader's 'study, pastime, rest, and food'. Gardening imagery again serves to demonstrate the importance of patient and careful application:

No good of worth sublime will Heaven permit  
 To light on man as from the passing air;  
 The lamp of genius, though by nature lit,  
 If not protected, pruned and fed with care  
 Soon dies, or runs to waste with fitful glare;  
 And learning is a plant that spreads and towers  
 Slow as Columbia's aloe, proudly rare,  
 That 'mid gay thousands, with the suns and showers  
 Of half a century, grows alone before it flowers. (5<sup>th</sup> R. 400)

Edward Young's 'Procrastination' continues the theme that 'tis madness to defer', to be always 'on the brink of being born' (5<sup>th</sup> R. 380), and James Beattie's poem acknowledges 'the dire effects of time and change'. The poet trusts that despite the ravages of age, he'll retain 'Candour, love, or sympathy divine / Whate'er of fancy's ray or friendship's flame is mine' (5<sup>th</sup> R. 395-6).

Such themes focus on preparing children for their future lives, rather than on the pleasures of the present. Akenside's 'Taste' describes that 'discerning sense / Of decent and sublime' originally bestowed by God, but which must be cultivated. Akenside uses an image of growth to convey his message and this is recontextualised in the Victorian era to confirm the earnest attention given to education at that time:

But though Heaven  
In every breast hath sown these early seeds  
Of love and admiration, yet in vain,  
Without fair culture's kind parental aid,  
Without enlivening suns, and genial showers,  
And shelter from the blast, in vain we hope  
The tender plant should rear its blooming head,  
Or yield the harvest promised in its spring. (5<sup>th</sup> R. 381)

The title of Cowper's 'Natural Forbearance, Necessary to the Happiness of the Married State' encapsulates a theme considered appropriate for older children. Domestic strife is the 'sorest ill of human life':

The kindest and the happiest pair  
Will find occasion to forbear,  
And something every day they live  
To pity, and perhaps forgive. (5<sup>th</sup> R. 397)

Hervey's 'The Convict Ship' is the first poem in the *Irish Readers* associated with Australia and Van Diemen's Land. This extract from his poem 'Australia' displays sympathy for the convicts being transported overseas. The opening stanza describes an idyllic setting of the ship in full sail with pennon streaming in a fair wind and the sailor singing 'gaily aloft in her shrouds'. The ship, however, is a 'mansion of sin', and below the deck hearts 'are breaking', for 'wave after wave is dividing / Bosoms that sorrow and guilt could not sever'. In a direct address to the reader, the poet uses the image of the ship's voyage to reflect on life:

'Tis thus with our life, as it passes along,  
Like a vessel at sea, amid sunshine and song,

Gaily we glide in the gaze of the world,  
 With streamers afloat, and with canvas unfurled;  
 All gladness and glory to wondering eyes,  
 Yet charted by sorrow and freighted with sighs:  
 Fading and false is the aspect it wears,  
 As the smiles we put on, just to cover our tears,  
 And the withering thoughts that the world cannot know,  
 Like heart-broken exiles lie burning below;  
 Whilst the vessel drives on to that desolate shore,  
 Where the dreams of our childhood are vanish'd and o'er. (5<sup>th</sup> R. 399)

The *Fifth Reader* introduced pupils to Shakespeare with short extracts from *As You Like It*, *The Winter's Tale*, *The Merchant of Venice*, *Hamlet* and *The Tragedy of King Richard II*, specifically chosen to encourage patriotism, good actions, cheerfulness, productive use of time and acceptance of adversity. Patriotism became a form of imperialism in Campbell's 'The Moral Change Anticipated by Hope' where he pictures the spread of Britain's civilized arts among 'barbarous hordes'. He invokes 'bright Improvement!' whose 'handmaid arts' of 'Truth, Mercy, Freedom' will

pervade the unfathomed darkness there,  
 And light the dreadful features of despair. (5<sup>th</sup> R. 402)

Although lighter verse is provided in the form of a song for May-day and Cowper's 'Report of an Adjudged Case, Not to be Found in any of the Books', the editor favoured poems of pathos, usually conveying didactic themes. 'Who is My Neighbour' focusses on the need to support the 'fainting poor', those 'bent low with sickness, cares and pain', and the 'Widow and orphan helpless left' (5<sup>th</sup> R. 409). Thomson's 'Snow' describes the death of a 'swain', a 'stiffen'd corse, / Stretch'd out, and bleaching in the northern blast', leaving a grieving wife and children (5<sup>th</sup> R. 378). An anonymous poem, 'The Deserted Wife,' describes the loyalty of a wife and mother whose husband 'feeds his passion on a wanton's life'. She affirms her readiness to care for him in sickness and that 'the memory of our loves will ne'er depart' (5<sup>th</sup> R. 392). Both the extract from Scott's *The Lay of the Last Minstrel* and Neele's 'The Silent Glen' convey a sense of pathos derived from nostalgia for the past, linked with ideas about the transient nature of life.

The status and function of poetry changed significantly from the *Second Irish Reader* to the *Fifth*. In the readers produced for young children, poetry was integrated more



closely to lesson themes and also illustrated the religious and moral themes of the prose sections of the books. In the senior readers, the prose lessons were more utilitarian and practical in nature. Here, poetry stood alone as the only imaginative material offered, and also served as the one means of conveying any religious and moral themes. This poetry rarely acknowledged the Romantic writers with their emphasis on the imagination and personal response to nature. Nature was viewed as an external element in the child's life, used as the subject of imagery to convey didactic moral themes, or to portray difficult circumstances, rather than any imaginative personal response or the 'spontaneous overflow of powerful feelings'. Perhaps the Romantic preoccupation with oneself and the subjective responses of a 'free and liberated imagination' were viewed as dangers in an age when utilitarianism and practical values were more important than personal pleasure and happiness in this life (Williams 275). Spiritual insights at a deeply personal level had no place in the scheme of things when machines and facts were paramount. Private hopes and fears were anathema, as was anything to excite personal emotion. Newman wrote that only the Christian virtues of 'mildness, restraint of emotion [and] calmness of judgement' could produce 'true poetry', not 'the unruly passions of a Byron' (Buckley 25).

Changes in the amount and nature of the poetry contained in three separate editions of the *Third Irish Reader*, published between 1845 and 1878, illustrate the influence of individual editors on the canon of poets and poems studied in elementary schools during this period. These changes modify Goldstrom's claim that

there is no need to distinguish between books [editions] published in one decade rather than another because neither the tone of an individual book nor the ideology of the authors undergoes any significant change throughout the period, and only the date of printing differentiates a publication of the fifties from a publication of the thirties (66).

Table 5 lists the poets and poems published in each edition. Only 4 poets and 4 poems were represented in all three, Thomas Campbell's 'The Harper and his Dog', William Cowper's 'Selkirk', Thomas Moore's 'A Hebrew Melody' and Wordsworth's 'The Pet Lamb'. Their subjects and mood reflect the standard themes of classroom poetry throughout these decades: Campbell and Wordsworth's sentimental focus on the bond between man and animal; Moore's triumphant

representation of the power of a Jehovah God; and Cowper's story of a man's exile and reconciliation 'to his lot'.

The changes Richard Whately made to the contents of the 1851 edition reflect the utilitarian and practical nature of much of the education of the time. He increased the number and range of prose lessons and reduced the poetry content. Many of the additional prose passages focussed on practical matters that were given additional emphasis with separate headings in his page of contents, for example 'Lessons on Money Matters', 'Outlines of Grammar', 'Lesson on Farming' and 'Manufactures'. Although the source and writers of some of these prose passages were acknowledged, not one of the writers of the eighteen poems was identified, including the writers of those poems retained from the 1845 edition. The poems comprised less than 20% of the book's readings, a reduction of more than 10% compared to the 1845 and 1878 editions. Whately added 10 anonymous pieces to the 8 poems retained from the first edition, and these were strongly didactic in theme. He excluded verse fables, perhaps because their moral themes were less directly presented than in the poems he favoured.

The relatively simple vocabulary of these 'new' poems and the directness of their themes would have made more immediate impact on pupils. 'On Prayer' and 'Heaven, or the Better Land' focussed on religion at a personal level. They were written in the first person, teaching children to recite that prayer was more than 'words alone':

Lord, teach me what I want,  
And teach me how to pray;  
Nor let me e'er implore thy grace,  
Not feeling what I say. ('On Prayer' 3<sup>rd</sup> R. 1851, 228).

'Heaven' illustrates a continuing emphasis on the future rather than present life. This 'better land' is a timeless place of 'fadeless bloom', beyond sorrow and death (3<sup>rd</sup> R. 1851, 242). An emphasis on future rather than immediate rewards is also obvious in 'Against Pride in Clothes'. Outward adornment should be eschewed for the 'Inward adornments of the mind'. The 'robes of richest dress' are 'Knowledge and virtue, truth and grace' (3<sup>rd</sup> R. 1851, 22). These are impervious to weather, aging and mould. Wearing such apparel will ensure a future in heaven.

The poem 'A Minute' parallels the theme of Watts's 'The Sluggard' by emphasising the productive and wholesome use of time, and warning of the danger of squandering years in 'idleness, folly, and strife' (3<sup>rd</sup> R. 1851, 12). 'The Two Gardens' illustrates the reward gained from hard work:

Thus Richard the idle, who shrunk from the cold,  
Beheld his trees naked and bare;  
While Harry, the active, was charm'd to behold  
The fruit of his patience and care. (3<sup>rd</sup> R. 1851, 30)<sup>31</sup>

'The Gleaner' expands this theme to include the importance of taking care of, and responsibility for, others. Before sunrise, 'poor Mary' is hard at work gleaning the ears of corn. She has no time to 'play, and to idle and chat', for she has to care for an ill mother and her 'poor little brothers [...] crying for bread' (3<sup>rd</sup> R. 1851, 39).

The editor replaced Cunningham's poem 'Day: a Pastoral' from the 1845 edition with two poems simpler in vocabulary and with strong didactic messages for young people. Cunningham's lyrical description of the landscape obviously had no place in a collection of writings so functionally educational. In contrast, 'Morning' calls a little girl to wake and arise early and go 'cheerfully' to her task, knowing 'the true value of moments too well / To waste them in idle repose'. 'Evening' allows the young girl who has finished her work with 'industry, patience and care' to rest her head on the 'pillow with joy' where 'no thorn to disturb shall be there' (3<sup>rd</sup> R. 1851, 191).

'The Tempest' also illustrates the functional emphasis placed on poetry in this edition. The writer warns of the dangers of lightning strikes and describes practical means of avoiding them during heavy storms. Although the implied reader can depend on God's 'divine power', he will also sensibly avoid sheltering under trees and touching 'the metal bell-wire stand' and the 'door-lock'. Thus, people who 'walk in wisdom's pleasant way' need not 'dread the stormy day, / Or lightnings flashing from the sky' (3<sup>rd</sup> R. 1851, 119).

The 1878 edition of the *Third Reader* was revised and adapted for use in Australian schools, probably as a result of local concerns about the suitability and content of earlier editions. In 1876, a Tasmanian school inspector suggested that

An unsatisfactory standard in Reading may often be fairly attributed to the use of the books of the Irish series. They contain materials which may be turned to good account by competent Teachers, but in other hands they have nothing to recommend them, and a great many of the lessons have literally to be translated into English before they can be made intelligible to the children. (LCP 18,1876, Paper 21: 28)

The revised edition of the reader was published under the sanction of the Education Department, Victoria. Its title page included the statement that it had been revised by an inspector of schools in that state for the use of schools in 'Australia, Tasmania and New Zealand'.<sup>32</sup> An 'Advertisement', printed on the facing page, expressed the publisher's hope that these 'special editions' would be appreciated, 'not only for cheapness, but also as being better suited than any other series for the use of Colonial Youth', because they contained special 'Articles of interest to the Colonies, written expressly by gentlemen of Colonial experience' (Fig. 3).

Although several prose passages in the 1878 edition of the reader did relate to life in Australia – for example three lessons on the kangaroo – the poetry made no such concession. Twenty-six of the reader's 35 poems were new to the series, and proportionally more of these were Irish than had been the case in previous editions.<sup>33</sup> Thomas Moore's works were favoured. Other poets included for the first time in the *Irish Readers* were Joseph Addison, Charles Mackay, Edward Caswall, H.W. Longfellow, Barry Cornwall, John Newton, Bernard Barton and two Irish-born writers, Thomas Wolfe and Lady Helen Dufferin. Longfellow's inclusion continued the recognition of poets from America that had begun with poems by Lydia Sigourney and Hannah Gould in earlier editions.

Poems with religious and moral themes were less prominent in the 1878 edition. Several of these poems employed bird motifs to convey morals in a manner similar to the verse fables popular in the early editions. Caswall's 'The Captive Linnet', whose subject is trapped in a tree by a 'single thread of silken hair', concludes with a warning to children:

Ye children of the world beware!  
Too oft a lock of silken hair  
Has made the soul a prize;  
And held it riveted to earth,  
When, by the instinct of its birth,  
It should have sought the skies. (3<sup>rd</sup> R. 1878, 81)

## ADVERTISEMENT.

THE Publisher hopes that the SPECIAL EDITIONS of the READING BOOKS of the IRISH BOARD of NATIONAL EDUCATION, which have been revised and adapted for Schools in AUSTRALIA, TASMANIA, and NEW ZEALAND, will be appreciated, not only for cheapness, but also as being better suited than any other series for the use of Colonial youth.

The New Editions of the *Second, Third, and Fourth Reading Books* contain special Articles of interest to the Colonies, written expressly by gentlemen of Colonial experience; and these volumes have been revised under the superintendence of Mr. ARCHIBALD GILCHRIST, M.A., one of the Inspectors of Schools for Victoria. The *Fifth Reading Book* is now undergoing revision.

ALEX. THOM,  
*Printer and Publisher.*

THE QUEEN'S PRINTING OFFICE,  
87 & 88, Abbey-street, Dublin,  
April, 1876.

Published under the Sanction of the Education  
Department, Victoria.

# THIRD READING BOOK

OF THE



NEW EDITION, REVISED AND ADAPTED

FOR THE USE OF

SCHOOLS IN AUSTRALIA, TASMANIA, AND  
NEW ZEALAND,

BY ONE OF

HER MAJESTY'S INSPECTORS OF SCHOOLS, VICTORIA.

DUBLIN:

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1878.

Fig. 3. Title page. *Third Irish Reader* adapted for use in Australasian schools

Cornwall's 'The Stormy Petrel' replicates the moral of Coleridge's 'Ancient Mariner', and Thomas Moore's 'The Dove' uses an incident involving the bird and a hawk to present the message of the Bible being 'Heaven's reflected ray' that will forestall 'the foes of virtue' (3<sup>rd</sup> R. 1878, 103). Cowper's chirping cricket celebrates the virtues of praise and happiness, in contrast to man's 'repining discontent' (3<sup>rd</sup> R. 1878, 146).

A difference in tone between the religious poems in this edition and those of 1845 and 1851 is their emphasis on praise, rather than on sin, redemption and thoughts of a better world in the hereafter. Only Montgomery's 'On the Loss of Friends' and Moore's 'This World is all a Fleeting Show' reject 'the stormy day' of life in favour of the 'calm of Heaven' (3<sup>rd</sup> R. 1878, 311) and the 'pure and perfect day' of heaven's 'light' (3<sup>rd</sup> R. 1878, 120). Moore's other religious poems included in the reader focus on praise and the love of the Creator. Such themes are crowned by Addison's celebration of 'the spacious firmament on high' and the 'Creator's power' revealed in nature (3<sup>rd</sup> R. 1878, 21).

Several poems continue the tradition of urging readers to be satisfied with their station in life. John Newton's theme is epitomised in the title of his poem 'The Kite; or, Pride must have a Fall', and Charles Mackay's 'Daily Work' recognises that the 'more we work the more we win', at the same time acknowledging that the winnings will be meagre compared with a 'Lord's estate' or those 'with rank'. The worthy man is he

Who only asks for humblest wealth,  
Enough for competence and health,  
And leisure, when his work is done,  
To read his book  
By chimney-nook,  
Or stroll at setting of the sun; (3<sup>rd</sup> R. 1878, 51)

Longfellow's blacksmith exemplifies such themes; his 'brow is wet with honest sweat' and he 'owes not any man'. It is on the 'sounding anvil' of 'the flaming forge of life' that we prove our worth (3<sup>rd</sup> R. 1878, 82). This is Longfellow's 'Psalm of Life':

Let us, then, be up and doing,  
With a heart for any fate;

Still achieving, still pursuing,  
Learn to labour and to wait. (3<sup>rd</sup> R. 1878, 206)

Feelings of pathos and the pathetic that focussed on women and children in earlier editions are now applied to subjects of war and exile. This is the first time poems of war have been included in the readers, and the editor's choice may have been influenced by both Irish politics and Palgrave's *The Golden Treasury* (1861) that included the three war poems found in the 1878 edition. Campbell's 'Hohenlinden' and Wolfe's 'The Burial of Sir John Moore' both dwell on the glory of death in battle. Wolfe's poem and Campbell's 'Ye Mariners of England' mark the beginning of an extensive anthologising of patriotic poems extolling the heroism of British men in times of war:

Where Blake and mighty Nelson fell  
Your manly hearts shall glow,  
As ye sweep through the deep,  
Where the stormy winds do blow. (3<sup>rd</sup> R. 1878, 209)

Themes of war and exile come together in Campbell's 'The Soldier's Dream'. Resting at night after a battle in which 'thousands had sunk on the ground overpower'd', the soldier dreams a 'sweet vision' of his homeland and loved ones:

Then pledged me the wine-cup, and fondly I swore  
From my home and my weeping friends never to part;  
My little ones kiss'd me a thousand times o'er,  
And my wife sobbed aloud in her fullness of heart. (3<sup>rd</sup> R. 1878, 161)

Exile from friends and loved ones is a major theme in Moore's 'The Meeting of the Waters', 'On Music' and 'Go Where Glory Waits Thee'. In the first of these poems, memories of a valley in County Wicklow are made more exquisite by the memories of friends, 'the belov'd of my bosom [...] / Who made every dear scene of enchantment more dear' (3<sup>rd</sup> R. 1878, 170). The third poem is the lament of a girl separated from her lover, who urges him to remember her as he recalls scenes of home: summer evenings, autumn days, the 'gay hearth blazing' and songs she once sang for him (3<sup>rd</sup> R. 1878, 166). And music is itself celebrated as a comfort, stirring memories of earlier and better times:

When thro' life unblest we rove,  
Losing all that made life dear,  
Should some notes we used to love,  
In days of boyhood, meet our ear,

Oh! how welcome breathes the strain!  
Wakening thoughts that long have slept;  
Kindling former smiles again  
In faded eyes that long have wept. ('On Music' 3<sup>rd</sup> R. 1878, 149)

The pathos and sentiment in these verses serve to heighten feelings of exile from Ireland in poems such as Walter Scott's 'Love of Country', Helen Dufferin's 'Lament of the Irish Emigrant', Bernard Barton's 'The Irish Maiden's Song' and Thomas Campbell's 'The Exile of Erin'. These four poems express pride in the land of Ireland whose 'endearing claim' on Barton's heart remains strong, despite the attraction of Scotland's 'savage grandeur' or England's fertile plains (3<sup>rd</sup> R. 1878, 125). Dufferin's Irish emigrant's lament for his homeland and his lost bride, and Thomas Campbell's exile's dying wish that:

Green be thy fields, sweetest isle of the ocean!  
And thy harp-striking bards sing aloud with devotion,  
*Erin mavourneen, Erin-go-bragh* (3<sup>rd</sup> R. 1878, 194)

reinforce Moore's 'Love of Country' whose sad history ('thy chains as they rankle, thy blood as it runs') prompts the poet to declare:

Remember thee? yes, while there's life in this heart,  
It shall never forget thee, all lorn as thou art;  
More dear in thy sorrow, thy gloom, and thy showers,  
Than the rest of the world in their sunniest hours. (3<sup>rd</sup> R. 1878, 175)<sup>34</sup>

These poems of exile and yearning, expressing dissatisfaction with present circumstances and settings, appear to counteract the themes of other poems in the readers which urge people to be satisfied with their present fate, to work cheerfully, accept the current situation and expect nothing more.

A comparison of the poetry in the 1878 edition of the *Third Reader* with that published in the *Irish Readers* over the previous twenty years points to changing fashions in the poetry selected for elementary classrooms in future years. Perceptions about children's needs were changing. The quantity of traditional 'improving verse' centred on matters of personal and social morality was decreasing gradually in favour of more lyrical works and poems of narrative action, usually depicting significant historical events and acts of valour. Nevertheless, Hugh Price's description of nineteenth-century classroom readers as 'grim didactic books that made no concessions to their young readers' is a fairly accurate description of the *Irish Readers* (1). The Newcastle Report, published in England in 1861, criticized



much of the language of the texts as being ‘incomprehensible’ to children (Minns 5). Some Tasmanian education leaders in the 1870s shared this view.

In his annual reports of 1870 and 1871, Inspector Burgess wrote of ‘well-grounded complaints’ about the difficulties even the *Irish Readers* for junior classes presented to children, with the result that the lessons demanded ‘a great deal of explanation and care on the part of the Teacher’ (*LCP* 16, 1870, Paper 18: 21; and *LCP* 17, 1871, Paper 21: 20). Revised editions of the *Irish Readers* also created practical problems for teachers and inspectors. Both Inspectors Burgess and Stephens noted that these were ‘not so well graduated for class purposes’ as the earlier editions, and commented on the difficulties that arose when different editions of the readers were used in the same classroom (*LCP* 17, 1871, Paper 21: 20; and *LCP* 30, 1880, Paper 31: 9). By 1878, the Board of Education found it necessary to circularise schools revising the reading level requirements for each grade, because of the confusion created by the number of editions in use (BoE ‘Circulars’ 1 March 1878). Such circumstances meant that inspectors recommended the introduction of a new series of readers in Tasmanian schools, noting in 1876 that ‘an excellent opportunity was afforded during the past year of uniting with some of the neighbouring Colonies in the preparation of a series of properly graduated Reading Books adapted to the special wants of Australian and Tasmanian schools’ (*LCP* 23, 1876, Paper 21: 28). Stephens’s hope that the *Irish Readers* would be ‘got rid of’ was realised early in the next decade (*LCP* 31, 1881, Paper 33: 9).

### ***The Australian Reading Books***

The *Australian Reading Books* were published in Britain during the 1870s as part of the Collins’ series of schools texts, and subsequently published in Sydney. They were edited by an Englishman, Thomas Morrison, and comprised a primer and five graded readers, the fifth reader being designed for both fifth and sixth class pupils.<sup>35</sup> There were two separate editions of the latter, one for boys and one for girls. The Board of Education advised schools of the introduction of the *Australian Readers* in January 1882 (BoE ‘Circulars’ 10 January 1882). The Board prescribed which readers were to be used at each grade level, but permitted the continuing use of the *Irish Readers* until a full supply of the new readers was obtained. Inspectors welcomed the series as being much more appropriate for Tasmanian children,

although they again noted the confusion caused by the concurrent use of both sets of readers in some classrooms (*LCP* 35, 1883, Paper 88: 15). The 1883 Royal Commissioners expressed the hope that the Irish series would not 'be wholly superseded by the Australian Readers'. Although they found the new series 'unobjectionable in a positive way', the Commissioners objected to the omission of sections of some passages that had been removed apparently to preserve the secular nature of the readers. They noted specifically the omission of one stanza from Longfellow's 'A Psalm of Life' presumably because of its reference to God (*JHA* 45, 1883, Paper 70: xxiv).<sup>36</sup>

The range of material in the *Australian Reading Books* was similar to that of their predecessors and covered subjects relating to science, nature studies, geography, history, industries and manufacturing. The editor claimed that the books were 'specially prepared [...] to meet the requirements of education in Australia', and that the 'utmost care' had been taken to adapt material to local circumstances. At the same time, he had included extracts from 'standard English Authors' because these

were the common property of every English-speaking child, and should find a place in school-books used both at home and abroad. (*Third Reader* iii)

English writers and topics dominated both poetry and prose, and Australian writers and articles about the country were in the minority.

All the prose and poetry lessons in the *First Reader* were universal in theme and predominantly didactic, emphasising personal behaviour, relationship with others and with animals. No distinctive Australian content was obvious. Nursery rhymes such as 'Mary had a little lamb' and 'Twinkle, twinkle little star' in this reader signalled the introduction of such verse in readers prescribed for Tasmanian classrooms in future years. The *Second Australian Reading Book* contained material about Australian flora and fauna and the seasons. Four of the 18 poems addressed Australian weather, and bird life. Of the 59 lessons in the *Third Australian Reading Book*, 11 (including 1 poem) related directly to Australia, 3 to countries of the Commonwealth and 14 (including 4 poems) directly to Great Britain. The remaining lessons were narrative, descriptive and discursive passages (including 2 poems) pertaining generally to life anywhere. There were no Australian poems and fewer prose readings about the country in the *Fourth Reader*. The *Fifth Reading Book* for

*Boys* contained 145 lessons of which 17 related to Australia directly, 4 to the Commonwealth, 34 to Britain and the remainder to general topics. Most of the British material consisted of poems; no Australian poetry was included. Just over 80 of these lessons were repeated in the *Fifth Reading Book for Girls*. Here, too, there was no Australian poetry. All the 'new' lessons in this reader focussed on domestic issues such as cleanliness and personal care, the management of illnesses, and advice about food and clothing. The poetry considered suitable for inclusion in the separate readers for boys and girls reflected attitudes to male and female roles in life at that time.

Table 6 shows that the proportion of poetry to prose in the *Australian Readers* was similar to that in the *Irish Readers*, but that it increased more systematically from classes 4 to 6.<sup>37</sup> Leaving aside the rhymes and ditties from the *First Reading Book*, the other readers contained 111 poems, 29 of which were common to the *Fifth Readers for Boys and Girls* and 2 that were repeated in readers for different grades. Twenty-eight of the 111 poems were anonymous or unattributed, a ratio almost identical to that of the sample of *Irish Readers*. The 83 poems by identified writers were the work of 43 poets, 27 of whom were represented in the *Australian Readers* by a single poem. This ratio of representation was also very similar to that of the *Irish Readers*. These similarities suggest that there was an established pattern of distribution between poetry and prose in a range of nineteenth-century school readers, and an accepted practice of including a wide range of poets; poetry would usually occupy less than 30% of the texts' contents, and only a minority of poets would be featured more than once in each text.

Table 7 lists the poets and poems included in the *Second, Third, Fourth* and both the *Fifth Australian Readers*, and identifies those poets and poems continued from the *Irish Readers* and the BFSS *Daily Lesson Books*. Only 15 of the poets included in the *Irish Readers* and 10 from the BFSS *Third Daily Lesson Book* are represented in the Australian series. Eight of these 25 poets appeared in both the *Daily Lesson Books* and the *Irish Readers*: Cowper, Hemans, Mary Howitt, Montgomery, Shakespeare, Southey, James Thomson, and Wordsworth. They can be considered to form the nucleus of an evolving canon of poets studied in the State's elementary schools in the latter part of the nineteenth century. A further 5 of the 25 poets who appeared in at

least one of the earlier readers can be added to this canon because they continue to feature in future class readers: Thomas Campbell, Coleridge, Longfellow, Charles Mackay and Walter Scott.<sup>38</sup> From this time, however, almost all the remaining 52 poets from earlier readers who are not represented in the *Australian Readers* do not feature in future class readers. Of the 5 poems continued from the *Irish Readers*, only Southey's 'The Battle of Blenheim' and Longfellow's 'The Village Blacksmith' maintained a presence in subsequent readers.

The editor of the *Australian Readers* introduced 24 poets to Tasmanian classrooms, most noticeably Elizabeth Browning, Robert Burns, Byron, Thomas Gray and P.B. Shelley who were to feature regularly in future school readers. Poems by Byron and Shelley and the increased representation of Wordsworth signalled greater attention to Romantic verse in the readers. The editor increased the number of Longfellow's poems and maintained the representation of Walter Scott, Shakespeare and Edward Young found in earlier readers. He gave significantly less space to the poetry of Thomas Campbell, William Cowper and James Montgomery. The American poet John Greenleaf Whittier was included in the readers for the first time, as were the female poets Eliza Cook and Carolina Nairne.

The one poem by an acknowledged Australian poet included in the *Australian Readers* was Henry Kendall's 'The Last of his Tribe'. The other four unattributed poems dealing with specifically Australian topics, and therefore probably Australian in origin, were included in the *Second Reader*: 'There is a Funny Bird', 'The Months', 'The Air' and 'The Cockatoo'. Australian poetry, however, had no significant status within these texts, a fact highlighted by its omission from the senior readers in the series, despite the prominence given there to prose lessons about the country's flora and fauna, exploration and geography.

The nature of the poetry in the *Australian Readers* points to gradual changes in the subject matter and themes of classroom poetry during the next decades. Overtly religious verse is less prominent. 'The Use of Flowers' is the only poem in the *Second Reader* which deals directly with this subject, but even here the anonymous writer acknowledges that the main function of flowers is to 'minister delight' and 'beautify the earth', rather than 'whisper hope' when 'faith is dim' (51).<sup>39</sup>

Wordsworth's 'The Pet Lamb', one of the most frequently anthologised poems during this period, is the only poem in this reader conveying the theme of caring for animals. Poems addressing aspects of behaviour are given priority. These emphasize the importance of truthfulness ('The Truthful Boy'), kindness ('The Wasp and the Bee'), persistent application to lessons ('The Cockatoo', 'Little by Little' by Swain) and respect for parents (Howitt's 'Father is Coming'). 'The Blind Boy' and 'The Deformed Child' address issues relating to handicapped children for the first time in the readers being considered in this study, while reiterating an established theme of accepting life's circumstances with stoicism and even cheerfulness. And if these two poems can be considered examples of that strain of pathos so popular in the *Irish Readers*, only one other poem in the *Second Reader* performs this function, by addressing the 'dim shadows' of death. 'Gone to Sleep' comforts the mother and dead Minnie's siblings with the promise that

Now no clay holds back the spirit  
Soaring through the upper deep;  
Only to earth's cares and trials  
Has thy loved one gone to sleep. (157)

Two poems in the *Second Reader* herald changes in the nature of poetry included in class readers. 'The New Moon' describes a child's imaginative response to the night sky, and is an early example of non-didactic verse written specifically for young minds, rather than verse containing adult themes simplified to match children's levels of understanding. Felicia Hemans's 'Casabianca' presents themes of valour and loyalty for the first time in poems at this junior level and foreshadows a major theme in the more advanced readers in the Australian series and future school readers.

Poems in the *Third* and *Fourth Australian Readers* are almost equally divided between those conveying traditional didactic themes, and narratives celebrating historical events or aspects of nature. In the *Third Reader*, didactic and descriptive elements are sometimes subsumed in poems of action, bravery and optimism. Cowper's 'Boadicea' and the unattributed 'The Wreck of the Orpheus' link these qualities with patriotism. The sailors on the Orpheus face death 'with three British cheers – / Cheers of immortal fame', and the poet writes:

O England, while thy sailor host

Can live and die like these,  
Be thy broad lands, or won or lost,  
Thou'rt mistress of the seas. (192-3)

Both 'The Emigrant Ship' and 'The Song of Steam' project optimism and faith in the future. In the first of these, the writer eschews elements of pathos, sentimentality and longing, favoured in the poetry of the *Irish Readers*, and predicts a bright and happy future for the families leaving for distant shores, where the land is 'both fair and free' (58). Cutter's 'The Song of Steam' – included also in the *Fourth* and *Fifth Readers* – reinforces some of the prose lessons on manufacturing, and celebrates the contribution of steam power to a country's industrial might, albeit with a warning about the need to desist from the 'boast of human might, / And the pride of human power' (77).<sup>40</sup> Southey's 'The Battle of Blenheim' contains a similar warning in its ironic message about the negative aspects of war. Kendall's 'The Last of His Tribe' is the first Australian poem to be included in prescribed readers for Tasmanian classrooms. Its pathos and emphasis on death are not new elements in nineteenth-century classroom readers, but the focus on Aboriginal culture and concern for the fate of the Aborigines are.

The *Fourth Reader* contains vigorous narrative verse depicting valour, danger and tragedy, such as 'Shipwreck', Longfellow's 'The Wreck of the "Hesperus"' and Scott's 'Lord Marmion and his Train' and 'The Battle of Flodden'. The first two continue the strain of sentimental pathos popular in poetry of earlier readers, but Scott's two poems celebrate historical conflicts of 'Recoil and rally, charge and rout, / And triumph and despair' (136), subjects that increased in popularity at the end of the century. These poems, Goldsmith's 'Different Countries Compared', and the descriptive nature poems, such as Byron's 'Apostrophe to the Ocean' and Cowper's description of winter from *The Task*, contrast markedly with the more didactic poems included in the reader. 'The Heritage' maintains the longstanding theme of the worthiness of poverty and a humble station in life, prevalent in both the BFSS *Daily Lesson Books* and the *Irish Readers*:

What doth the poor man's son inherit?  
A patience learned by being poor;  
Courage, if sorrow come, to bear it;  
...  
Toil only gives the soul to shine,  
And makes rest fragrant and benign. (44)

Two brief extracts from Young's *The Complaint, or Night Thoughts on Life, Death and Immortality* and Mackay's 'If fortune with a smiling face' continue the popular theme of *carpe diem*:

Be wise today; 'tis madness to defer;  
Next day the fatal precedent will plead,  
Thus on till wisdom is pushed out of life.  
Procrastination is the thief of time. (*The Complaint* 145)

The 29 poems common to the *Fifth Readers*, prepared separately for boys and girls, present similar themes. 'All the Day Idle' and Longfellow's poems 'Psalm of Life' and 'Sand of the Desert in an Hour-Glass' address the passing of time, urging the reader to be 'a strong actor in the world's great bustle, / Not a weak minion, or a pampered guest' (G. 169). Longfellow likens this latter state to that of 'dumb, driven cattle' and wants his reader to be a hero in 'the world's broad field of battle' (B. 173). In 'The Hope of the World', Thomas Campbell predicts that the achievements of the world's former heroes will be matched by those that 'slumber yet in uncreated dust' (B. 38).

Such invocations to action and future success contrast markedly with the traditional theme of accepting, and finding happiness in, humble and poor circumstances. In his poem 'Peace', Alford warns readers not 'to lift our hopes too high', but to seek peace in 'passing onward free from harm / Through every day's employ' (B. 134). Gray is more explicit in 'On the Pleasures of Vicissitude':

Happier he, the peasant, far  
From the pangs of passion free,  
That breathes the keen yet wholesome air  
Of rugged penury.  
He, when his morning task is done,  
Can slumber in the noontide sun;  
And hie him home, at evening's close,  
To sweet repast, and calm repose. (B. 20) <sup>41</sup>

The editor resolves an apparent tension between these two conflicting themes by identifying them with male and female attributes in the poems specific to the separate readers for boys and girls. John Wilson's 'A Sinking Ship' exploits the traditional subjects of death and pathos, but whereas he presents no future hope to the drowning and dead, Longfellow's 'Resignation' mourns the death of a daughter within the

context of the resurrection of the dead and the belief that his 'fair maiden' is 'Clothed with celestial grace':

We see but dimly through the mists and vapours;  
Amid these earthly damps,  
What seem to us but sad, funereal tapers  
May be heaven's distant lamps. (G. 69)

The majority of the poems common to the boys' and girls' readers, however, celebrate nature, patriotism and freedom, and so establish new themes in the poetry taught in Tasmanian classrooms. Bruce's 'The Cuckoo' and Felicia Hemans's 'Morning Song' treat nature in a positive if sentimental light, but Shelley's 'The Cloud' and Byron's 'The Ocean' are more purely descriptive and celebrate the power and supremacy of the natural elements. The extract from Wordsworth's 'Tintern Abbey', titled in the reader 'The Teachings of Nature', introduces children to a sublime response to nature in the accepted English Romantic tradition.

Of all the themes in the 29 poems, those relating to patriotism, valour and freedom are given most emphasis, often within the context of adventurous deeds and by means of vigorous narrative and evocative descriptive verse. The tenor of the language in these poems contrasts strongly with the rather tepid, passive and resigned tone of the diction in much of the poetry in earlier readers. Deeds of bravery and adventure which Campbell describes in 'The Genius of Exploration' are extended to incorporate patriotic fervour in the extracts from Shakespeare's *Henry V*, Akenside's 'Inscription for a Column at Runnymede', and the anonymous 'The Day of the Funeral', all of which focus on battles for freedom, strong leadership against odds, and England's debt to such heroism. Byron's tribute to the 'glory that was Greece' further amplifies this message, and his lines from *The Giaour*, titled 'Ancient and Modern Greece', suggest the legacy of bravery and freedom that is Britain's heritage from an earlier civilization.

Wordsworth celebrates this legacy in 'Composed in the Valley near Dover on the day of Landing': 'Thou art free, / My country! and 'tis joy enough and pride / For one hour's perfect bliss, to tread the grass / Of England once again [...]' (G. 208). Similar patriotic fervour is expressed in Montgomery's 'Home', where England is a 'land of beauty, virtue, valour, truth, / Time-tutored age and love-exalted youth' (G.



208). Patriotism and imperialism unite in Lyons's 'Triumphs of the English Language' that celebrates the imperialist glory of England by cataloguing the spread of 'Stout Albion's' language throughout Europe, the Americas, the Middle and Far East, and the African and Australian continents. This poem contains one of the few references to Tasmania in the entire series of *Australian Readers*.

Tasmania's maids are wooed and won in gentle Saxon speech;  
Australian boys read Crusoe's life by Sydney's sheltered beach:  
It dwells where Afric's southmost capes meet oceans broad and blue,  
And Nieuveld's rugged mountains gird the wide and waste Karoo. (G. 31)

The fact that each of the *Fifth Readers*, prepared separately for boys and girls, included additional poetry different in style and theme from the 29 poems common to both readers, illustrates both the function of poetry and the subjects considered appropriate for the two sexes at the end of the nineteenth century. The *Boys' Reader* contained 18 'new' poems and the *Girls' Reader* 24. The differences between the two offerings were pronounced. Most of the poems added to the *Boys' Reader* were narrative poems involving men in battle or some form of physical activity. Those concerned with the natural world described hostile or awe-inspiringly grand landscapes. With few exceptions the poems added to the *Girls' Reader* focussed on womanhood and motherhood, and a response to gentler, more welcoming and comforting landscapes.

Those poems in the *Boys' Reader* favouring some of the most obviously 'masculine' qualities were the narratives by Scott ('The Douglas'), Aytoun ('The Battle of Killiecrankie') and Byron ('Mazeppa's Last Ride'). Each involves some form of physical combat or endurance, survival against considerable odds and the presence of courage, tenacity and strength of body and mind. These themes were complemented by extracts from Shakespeare's *Henry VIII* depicting the fortitude and grace with which both Wolsley and Buckingham faced death. Other poems raised questions about war and patriotism. Cowper's 'The Martyrs' (an extract from Book V of *The Task*) contrasts the praise given to patriots who die for their country with the 'little praise' given to martyrs who have died in the face of tyranny:

With their names  
No bard embalms and sanctifies his song:  
And history, so warm on meaner themes,  
Is cold on this. (259)

And the extract from Samuel Daniel's 'Epistle to the Countess of Cumberland' celebrates that level of peace attained by a man who can rise above

lower regions of turmoil!  
Where all the storms of passions mainly beat  
On flesh and blood; where honour, power, renown,  
Are only gay afflictions ...[.] (356)

The blacksmith in Mackay's 'Tubal Cain' forgoes the forging of 'spear and sword' for the making of ploughshares, acknowledging that by producing weapons of war he has encouraged men's 'lust for carnage blind' (284). Byron's 'Eve of Waterloo' contrasts the social pleasures of the young men and women on the eve of battle with the carnage and loss experienced in the ensuing combat.

J.S. Knowles in 'Tell's Address to his Native Mountains' and Coleridge in 'Before Sunrise in the Vale of Chamouni' describe the freedom and excitement they experience in the presence of rugged, awe-inspiring mountains: the 'roaring' winds, thunder, and lightning of the mountain blast (212), the 'precipitous, black jagged rocks' of Mont Blanc, and the 'wild torrents', with their 'Unceasing thunder and eternal foam' (369-70). Mont Blanc is a 'Great hierarch', and reminds Coleridge of the Creator God.

Of the twenty-four poems specific to the *Girls' Reader*, Schiller's 'Honour to Women' demonstrates the stereotypical contrasts between male and female attributes. Alternate stanzas list these contrasts. Women caress 'with hands ever pure / The flame of each holy, each beautiful feeling'; men's thoughts are driven by 'the storm of passion' and pursue the 'restless phantom' of their dreams. Women are 'nature's true daughters' in whom abide 'All graces, all gentleness'; men are 'ever warring, rushing / Onward through life's stormy way' with 'fervour, fierce and crushing'. Women are 'More free in their limited range' and resign themselves to 'sweet silent praises'; men are 'Strong, proud and self-commending' with 'obdurate' breasts steeled and rendered by 'Life's dark combats'. Women are touched by feelings and charity; men argue 'with the sword' and 'insolently trust' the powers of strife, war and havoc. Women calm 'the fierce discord of hatred and pride' and teach 'all whom the strife of wild passions would sever, / To unite in one bond' (255-7).

Cowper's 'To a Young Lady' and Wordsworth's three poems ('She was a phantom of delight', 'Three years she grew in sun and shower' and part I of 'The Westmoreland Girl') reinforce concepts of feminine virtue, gentleness and grace. Both poets use images of heaven, stars, light, and the gentler natural elements to represent these concepts and inspire 'vital feelings of delight' in the observer. 'Endurance, foresight, strength and skill' are also attributes which lead to acts of kindness and bravery prompted by 'the gift of love' when the young girl rescues the lamb (225). And the lines excerpted by the editor from Wordsworth's 'Tintern Abbey' depict nature engendering in the poet's sister 'lofty thoughts' and 'cheerful faith', making of the mind 'a mansion for all lovely forms' (242).

Other poems in the *Girls' Reader* direct the young female pupils' attention to the virtues and duties of motherhood. Cowper remembers his mother's acts of solace, 'meek intelligence' and the 'maternal smile' representing her 'constant flow of love' (248-51). Similarly Cook's 'The Old Arm Chair' recalls a mother's 'gentle words' of instruction in Christian principles (330). 'The Dumb Child' enumerates details of a mother's duty towards, and love for, her handicapped daughter and her hope that the child will find 'rapture' in the 'rich songs of heaven' (298). Similar parental feelings are expressed in Willis's 'David's Lament for Absalom' (311). The inclusion of Hood's 'The Song of the Shirt' would give girls pause for thought about the fate of the overworked and underpaid seamstresses of the time. Successful marriage and fulfilment in motherhood could avert such a fate, and were perceived 'as the summit of female achievement and the site of their most profitable work' (Black and MacRaild 267).

Six poems address the passing of time and the loss of youth and beauty. In 'Youth and Age' Coleridge recalls younger years when 'Life went a-Maying, / With Nature, Hope, and Poesy', and bemoans the 'change 'twixt now and then'. Although he wants to believe that 'Youth and I are housemates still', the poet recognises that age is a tedious taking-leave

Like some poor nigh-related guest,  
That may not rudely be dismiss;  
Yet hath outstay'd his welcome while,  
And tells the jest without the smile. (380)

Burns's 'To a Mountain Daisy' reminds girls that the fate of the crushed daisy is also the fate of any 'Who long with wants and woes has striv'n / By human pride or cunning driv'n / To misery's brink. (363). In Lee's 'The Church Bell' the bell's knell 'Speaks mournfully of Death' and the 'Decay of pomp and power'. It reminds 'the child so fair / Who sports in Summer's beams' that 'Life is a passing ray'. The poet's message is that we should 'work while yet 'tis day' (247). For Longfellow in 'Maidenhood', age and care 'come unawares', and the maiden is urged to retain the 'Buds and blossoms' of childhood's 'bough' to 'embalm' the 'heart of snows' so that the 'dew of youth':

shall steal  
Into wounds that cannot heal  
Even as sleep our eyes doth seal (342).

Two anonymous poems suggest other responses to the mutability of existence. 'Time's Takings and Leavings' recognises that age takes away the 'Bloom from the cheek, and lustre from the eye / The spirits light and gay', but acknowledges that such qualities are 'frail, and brief their date assigned'. Losses that time brings will not result in poverty 'knew we meek Religion's sway'. Religious faith

Would make Time's gifts enjoyed and used, while lent:  
And all it left behind,  
Of Love and Grace, a noble monument. (232)

'Time and Beauty' suggests that the loss of youth can result in a beauty where 'heavenly graces cluster':

There her eye all passion loses,  
But with reason shines serene;  
Truth its sober charm diffuses  
Gently o'er her softened mien.  
Thought restrains her youthful wildness;  
Calmness, holy hopes bestow;  
On her face, love, joined to mildness,  
Blends its light with virtue's glow. (219)

Whittier's tale of 'Barbara Fritchie' demonstrates that courage can be part of the 'virtue's glow' of age (267).

### ***The New Australian School Series***

New Australian readers, titled *The New Australian School Series*, were published by William Brooks in Sydney near the end of the nineteenth century and were adopted for use in New South Wales' public schools (Firth 149).<sup>42</sup> The series was edited by

Robert Francis Irvine (1861–1941) and illustrated by David Henry Souter (1862–1935), and was the first set of readers available for Tasmanian schools to be edited, illustrated and published by Australians.<sup>43</sup> The Education Department allowed schools to use these texts instead of the *Australian Readers*, and a number of schools did so for several years (DoE ‘Circulars’ 5 March 1900).<sup>44</sup>

The five readers, titled sequentially *First Reader* through to *Fifth Reader*, were graded appropriately for classes two to six. Apart from the *First Reader*, their contents included a range of topics relating to history, geography and science, in addition to their literary offerings. The *First Reader*’s material was more limited, but included some information about the seasons and the natural world, and contained 7 poems. Table 8 shows that the percentage of poetry in the other *New Australian School* readers was slightly higher than that in the *Australian Readers*. Poetry again featured most prominently in the readers for the senior primary grades. The *Fifth Reader* contained proportionately more poetry than all previous school readers, except the BFSS *Daily Lesson Book III* and the 1845 edition of the *Third Irish Reader*.

Table 9 lists the poets and their poems included in the second, third, fourth and fifth readers of the series. These four readers contained 89 poems, including 3 anonymous verses and 1 extract from the Bible. The remaining 85 poems comprised works by 49 poets, 34 of whom were represented by 1 poem only. These figures were proportionately similar to those of earlier class readers, but the new readers featured a greater variety of poets. Works by pre-nineteenth-century poets were more prevalent, as were poems by Americans (8) and Australians (5). Felicia Hemans was the only female poet included in the readers. The most frequently represented poets were Scott and Shakespeare (each with 8 poems), Wordsworth and Longfellow (each with 5) and Browning and Byron (each with 3).

Poets maintained from the *Irish Readers* were Thomas Campbell, William Cowper, Oliver Goldsmith, Felicia Hemans, Henry Longfellow, John Langhorne, Charles Mackay, Thomas Moore, Walter Scott, Shakespeare and Wordsworth. Poets such as Cowper, Moore and Campbell were given only limited representation. James Montgomery’s work was not represented after featuring so strongly in the *Irish*

*Readers*. Poets included in the new series for the first time and who were to become popular in early twentieth-century readers were Matthew Arnold, William Blake, Robert Browning, John Keats, Rudyard Kipling, Edgar Allan Poe and R.L. Stevenson, as well as the Australians, Henry Lawson, A.B. Paterson and Adam Lindsay Gordon. Only 10 individual poems were repeated from earlier readers, 6 of these having held their place since their appearance in the *Irish Readers*.

Poets and poems included for the first time in the *New Australian School Series* point to the increasing prominence given to narrative and lyric forms of poetry in Tasmanian classrooms during the first half of the twentieth century. The narrative poems continue the emphasis on adventure, deeds of valour and patriotism, but also introduce humour to the canon, a quality missing from the nineteenth-century elementary school readers examined in this study. The lyric form usually comprised songs or ballads ranging from the Cavalier and Metaphysical poets of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries to the contemporary R.L. Stevenson. The increased presence of Romantic poets confirms the developing popularity of this form of poetry for classroom reading and study.

These changes, and the marked decrease in earnest moralistic poetry, so prevalent during the past fifty years, are evident when comparing the poetry content of the second readers of both the *Australian Readers* and *New Australian School Series*. In the latter text, the poems are usually lighter in tone than those in the earlier reader, even when suggestions of didacticism or pathos occur. Shakespeare's 'A Happy Life' ('Under the greenwood tree') and Mackay's 'The Miller of Dee' present the traditional theme of being satisfied with one's lot in life, but with none of the sermonizing or sentimentality of earlier poems. These poems sing rather than preach. The earlier reader's sad tale of a shipwreck, recounted in 'The "Northern Star"', is countered by Bayard Taylor's 'A Storm Song' where the dangers of a storm at sea are accepted 'with a cheery heart' (114). Even Wordsworth's 'Lucy Gray' could be claimed to end on a note of optimism. Scott's 'Lullaby of an Infant Chief' and the anonymous 'Blue-bells of Scotland' foreshadow possible dangers, but within the context of existing conditions of safety and security. All the above poems are either songs or stories. Lyrics are prominent among the 'new' poems included in the new *Second Reader*. Poems such as Blake's 'The Child and the Piper', Allingham's 'The

Fairy Folk', and Nash's 'Spring' are not overtly didactic, but address their subjects more imaginatively and with lilting rhythm and rhyme. Langhorne's 'To a Redbreast' has featured in readers since the 1830s when it was included in the BFSS *Daily Lesson Book II*. It is one of the more cheerful of those early poems, maintaining the previously popular theme of kindness to animals.

Most of the poems in the *Third* and *Fourth New Australian School Series* confirm these changes in emphasis. Thomas Hood's two poems ('Song' and 'I Remember, I Remember'), Scott's 'Hunting Song', Robert Herrick and Wordsworth's poems about daffodils and the extract from Milton's 'L'Allegro' maintain the lyrical impulse of poems in the *Second Reader*. Many of the poems are narratives, particularly of war, such as those by Scott, Macaulay and Browning. Campbell's 'Ye Mariners of England' and the Australian Kenneth Mackay's 'The Song that Men should Sing' are patriotic and signify an increased representation of such poems in the new *Fifth Reader*. An innovation is the introduction of humorous narratives to classroom reading, including poems such as 'John Gilpin', 'The Pied Piper of Hamelin', Thomas Peacock's 'The Priest and the Mulberry Tree' and Goldsmith's 'Elegy on the Death of a Mad Dog'. Traditional classroom themes of moral didacticism are restricted to Hemans's 'The Tyrolese Evening Hymn' and Longfellow's 'The Village Blacksmith' and 'A Psalm of Life'. Lawson's 'The Ballad of the Drover' features that strain of pathos so popular in earlier school readers.

Of all these new readers, the fifth in the series contains the most widely representative group of poets, half of which are included in class readers for the first time. These include poets from the seventeenth to the twentieth centuries ranging from James Shirley, George Herbert, Ben Jonson and Richard Lovelace to Rudyard Kipling and A.B. Paterson. On the basis of the poetry in these readers, eighteenth-century poets are gradually disappearing from the teaching canon, those from the nineteenth century continue to hold sway and some contemporary poets are being recognised. In comparison with previous readers for senior grades, the priority given to specific poets in this reader is interesting. Works by Cowper, Goldsmith, Felicia Hemans, Longfellow, Montgomery and Campbell are relegated to readers for the junior grades, as are all but one of Scott's poems. Australian poems are given a place

in the senior primary school for the first time. Apart from these and Shakespeare's verse and the two poems by Kipling, the poetry for senior grades is predominantly Metaphysical and Romantic. No women poets are represented in the *Fifth Reader*.

Subjects and themes prominent in the senior and later editions of the *Irish Readers* and in the *Australian Readers*, however, hold a place in the new *Fifth Reader*.

Thomas Macaulay's 'Armada', Scott's 'Douglas and Marmion' and Browning's 'Herve Riel' continue the emphasis on war and deeds of valour. Patriotic themes are prominent in Kipling's poems, Whitman's 'Death of President Lincoln', extracts from Shakespeare and Watson's 'To the Colonies'. The extract from Kendall's 'The Sydney International Exhibition', titled 'A Day of Dream', is the first clear reference to Australia's nationhood and future promise found in the readers. Kendall describes Phillip's first settlement as a 'majestic yesterday' where

in a time august with prayer and praise,  
Was born the nation of these splendid days. (57)

Burns's 'A Man's a Man for a' That' could be considered the most traditionally didactic poem in the reader, but the previously popular discursive and didactic poems of general statement are replaced by works more personal in theme and lyrical in style, such as Keats's 'To Autumn' and Wordsworth's 'The World is too much with us'. And this strain of Romantic revelation and illumination in response to landscape is now extended to include those poems by Coleridge ('Kubla Khan'), Poe ('The Haunted Palace') and Shelley ('On a Poet's lips I slept') which focus on the strange 'other world' of the visionary, and the fantasy of dream, feeding on 'aereal kisses / Of shapes that haunt thought's wildernesses' (257).

The subjects of the Australian poems included in the *New Australian Series* matched those traditionally acceptable for classroom poetry, and foreshadowed the nature of Australian verse included in future class texts. The choice of Kendall's 'A Day of Dream' reflected the increasing emphasis on nationalistic themes, subsequently confirmed by the popularity of his descriptive poems and those by other Australian writers such as Dorothea Mackellar. Narrative ballads extolling the virtues of life in 'the wide brown land' and the courage of pioneer men and women in the face of danger dominated the Australian classroom poetry taught in the early twentieth century. Some of this poetry, particularly the poems of Paterson, Lawson and



Gordon, contained elements of sentimentality and didacticism that had featured strongly in earlier verse anthologies. They fostered romantic visions of adventure, physical endurance and courage in outback Australia, in contrast to representations of dull, unhealthy city living. The most popular of these poems carried echoes of Scott, Longfellow and the Romantics.

### ***The Royal Readers***

In his 1897 report on the Southern District schools, Inspector Lovell praised the steady progress being made in reading and noted that the Australian reading books were being 'rapidly superseded by the "Royal" series, with the result, at least, that the children take more interest in their reading lessons' (*JPP* 39, 1898, Paper 36: 13). It is difficult to establish the cause for this increased interest simply on the basis of the *Royal Readers*' contents, which differed little from material in previous readers; in fact, it could be argued that the poetry was in some respects less immediately attractive and relevant to young readers than that in the both sets of Australian readers. Recalling his school days, the Tasmanian writer Roy Bridges described the *Royal Readers* as a 'dull set of Victorian blunders, as poor as the little books of the Religious Tract Society for the earlier generations' (169). Most of the editions of the *Royal Readers* used in Tasmanian classrooms had been published earlier than those of the *New Australian School Series* and it is interesting to consider what prompted the Education Department to favour readers produced in Britain rather than contemporary and local texts.<sup>45</sup> I suspect that the answer lies in the structure of the *Royal Readers* and their usefulness for teachers. The readers included comprehension questions on their lesson content, exercises in dictation, spelling, punctuation and paraphrasing, model compositions, lessons in letter writing and a range of vocabulary activities, material claimed in the preface to the *Fifth Reader* to be 'leading features in the plan of the volume' (n.p.). In this respect, the readers appeared to be the forerunners of those twentieth-century English class workbooks, popular in the 1950s and 60s, which aimed to provide a comprehensive English language and literature program. Inspector Lovell's comments about the *Royal Readers* could have been a reflection of teachers' positive response to the publications, as much as a measure of children's feelings.

The readers' structured activities applied to many of the poems and provide an indication of the approach to teaching poetry favoured at the time. The poems in the *Fourth Reader*, for example, were often accompanied by pronunciation exercises, passages for dictation, background information about the poet and the poem, and questions on the poems' subject matter. Teachers had ready-made lessons that encouraged a focus on reading for understanding rather than appreciation. None of the information about the poetry in this reader considered poetic form and language. One innovation in the *Fifth Reader* was the inclusion of 6 hymns and 7 poems selected as particularly appropriate for recitation.

The *Royal Readers* consisted of six graded readers and two primers. Table 10 indicates that the weighting given to poetry compared to prose in the six graded readers was on average higher than that in previous readers, except the BFSS *Daily Lesson Book III*. The lower ratio of poetry to prose in the *Sixth Reader* differed from the practice of increasing the poetry for senior classes in other readers, while that ratio was higher in the junior class readers than that in the Irish and Australian readers. The *Royal Readers* contained a total of 160 poems, 45 of which were anonymous or unattributed.<sup>46</sup> All but 2 of the anonymous poems were in the first three readers and many were short descriptive and narrative rhymes either describing animals ('The Merry Mice', 'What the Sparrow Chirps', 'The Foolish Mouse' from the *Second Reader*) or illustrating a moral ('The Ant and the Cricket', 'The Dog at his Master's Grave' from the *Third Reader*). Didactic and moral concerns featured strongly in this group of poems, as illustrated by titles such as 'Waste Not, Want Not', 'Do Justly', 'I will not Hurt my Little Dog' (*First Reader*) and 'Forgiveness', 'Do Justly', and 'The Golden Rule' (*Second Reader*). Only 6 of these poems had appeared in earlier class readers, 4 of them in the *Irish Readers* ('Morning', 'Evening', 'Heaven or the Better Land' and 'The Voice of Spring') and 2 in the *Australian Readers* ('The Bee' and 'The Wasp and the Bee').

The nature and function of poetry in the *Royal Readers I* and *II* paralleled that in the BFSS *Daily Lesson Books* and *Irish Readers* of the 1840s. Poems in the *Royal Reader I* focussed on obedience. 'On Instinct' presents God as a teacher, instructing all to 'do his holy will' (22), and in the poem 'Do Justly', children learn that God 'will try, / By His own law my works and ways' (56). Stanzas from 'God is in

Heaven' express identical ideas to those in one of Watts's devotional poems from the BFSS Lesson Sheets:

God is in heaven; and can he see  
What I am doing wrong? –  
Yes, child, he can; he looks at thee  
All day and all night long. (82)

'Persevere' and 'Lessons' are also typical of the poems from those earlier texts with their message that 'Work will bring its own reward' (65). And the final poem in the book, 'Let us Speak the best we Can' echoes an image popular in the 1840s to stress aspects of behaviour: 'Full oft a better seed is sown / By choosing thus the better plan' (142). J.D.B.'s poem 'Welcome, Little Robin' exemplifies the traditional practice of using birds as subjects for conveying moral themes. The comprehension questions at the foot of the poem ensure that children understand the poem's moral (Fig. 4).

Table 11 lists the 28 poets and their 32 poems from the *Royal Readers* that featured for the first time in the sample of texts being examined in this study. Eight of the poets were women and all but the Americans John Payne and Charles Norton were British writers. Most were minor poets whose reputation did not extend beyond their generation.<sup>47</sup> Only George Croly's 'Retreat of the French Army from Moscow', Hugo's 'The Poor Fisher Folk', John Payne's 'Home Sweet Home' and Tennyson's 'Charge of the Light Brigade' are included in the sample of twentieth-century readers discussed in chapter 3. Of these four poets, only Tennyson's work was widely represented in subsequent school readers. A possible reason for the surprisingly late inclusion of Tennyson's work in the readers, given that many of his poems had been published decades earlier, is suggested by Haass who points out that the poet's publisher (Macmillan) held the rights to many of the poems and frequently refused permission for them to be reprinted in books not sold by the company (59).

Table 12 lists the 37 poets and 39 of their poems from previous readers that were included in this sample of the *Royal Readers*. The most frequently represented poets are Thomas Campbell (9 poems), Byron (7), Hemans and Scott (6), Longfellow and Shakespeare (5), and Wordsworth (4). Hemans, Shakespeare and Wordsworth had appeared regularly in class readers since the BFSS *Daily Lesson Books* of the 1840s, and Campbell and Scott since the first editions of the *Irish Readers* in the same



## WELCOME, LITTLE ROBIN.

Bless-ings, things that make us | Or-phans, children who have lost  
happy. | father or mother, or both.

ON a cold winter day a poor little robin once came to a window. Some children who saw it, opened the window very gently, and the robin came hopping into the room. The children fed it with crumbs, and then let it fly away again. During the winter it came back several times to its little friends; but when the warm weather came, it flew away to the woods.

WELCOME, little Robin  
With the scarlet breast!  
In this winter weather  
Cold must be your nest.

Hopping o'er the carpet,  
Picking up the crumbs,  
Robin knows the children  
Love him when he comes.

Is the story true, Robin,  
You were once so good  
To the little orphans\*  
Sleeping in the wood?  
Did you see them lying,  
Pale; and cold, and still,  
And strew leaves above them  
With your little bill?

Whether true or not, Robin,  
We are glad to see  
How you trust us children,  
Walking in so free.  
Hopping o'er the carpet,  
Picking up the crumbs,  
Robin knows the children  
Love him when he comes.

And though little Robin  
Has no gift of speech,  
Yet he can a lesson  
To the children teach;—  
Still to trust that blessings\*  
Will be richly given,  
When they ask their Father  
For their bread from heaven.

J. D. B.

QUESTIONS.—What did the children do when the robin came to the window? What did the robin do? During what time did he come back? Where did he go when the warm weather came? What did the robin show by hopping in so freely? What lesson does he teach to children?

decade. Less prominence is given to Cowper (3 poems), Thomas Moore (2) and James Montgomery (1), but of these 10 poets only Montgomery's poetry does not appear in the poets represented in the sample of twentieth-century class readers discussed in chapter 3. The exclusion of the Metaphysical poets, Romantics such as Blake and Keats, and Australian poetry indicates that the *Royal Readers* were very much in the traditional mode of nineteenth-century school readers. More poets and poems from previous readers feature in the *Royal Readers* than in the *New Australian School Series*, and among these are the 5 poems which appear most frequently in the class readers from the 1840s, Cibber's 'The Blind Boy'; Mary Howitt's 'The Spider and the Fly'; Logan's 'To the Cuckoo'; Opie's 'The Orphan Boy'; and Scott's 'Love of Country'. Their durability indicates the continuing popularity of themes of pathos, patriotism, and acceptance of life's vicissitudes, and the Victorian preoccupation with stories presenting morals suitable for the young.

Many of the 45 'new' poems listed in Table 12, together with the 5 poems by Tennyson in Table 11, also demonstrate that the themes and style of the poems selected by the editors had changed little from those in earlier readers. Poems such as Hemans's 'The Pilgrim Fathers', Alford's 'Harvest Hymn', Holmes's 'Address to the Deity' and Goldsmith's 'The Village Preacher' maintain the nineteenth-century concern with religious faith, Alford's lines using the familiar harvest and growth metaphors to picture a God capable of purging sin and freeing from sorrow, so that the 'crop' will be wholesome and pure (144). Goldsmith's poem serves, too, to reiterate the perennial theme of helping others 'with meek and unaffected grace', not seeking personal aggrandisement or wealth (191).

Several poems contained themes of pathos, either relating to the tragic death of the young (Tennyson's 'May Queen' and Hemans's 'He Never Smiled Again') or the loyalty of animals to man (Wordsworth's 'Fidelity'). Longfellow uses pathos in 'The Slave's Dream' to comment on the evils of slavery, a subject new to the class readers. Traces of the nostalgic and sentimental poems of earlier readers are evident in Montgomery's 'A Mother's Love' and the extract from Goldsmith's *The Deserted Village*. Similar approaches and themes are evident in the poems listed in Table 11 such as 'The Soldier's Grave', 'The Little Boy that Died', 'Llewelyn and his Dog'

and 'Home, Sweet Home'. Humour has no place in the poetry of the *Royal Readers*, apart from Cowper's entertaining 'John Gilpin'.

Poems describing personal Romantic responses to the landscape are omitted from the *Royal Readers*. The few poems dealing directly with nature, such as Campbell's 'The Rainbow', Hemans's 'The Voice of Spring', Tennyson's 'The Brook' and Howitt's 'The Sea-Gull', are comprehensive in their descriptive detail, but eschew any revelatory personal response. Their approach reflects what Ian Michael sees as 'a fear of passion' when he suggests that such writers 'immobilised the passions by pinning them down in lists and talking about them' (193). The selection of Wordsworth's poetry included in the *Royal Readers* illustrates this point; the four poems included here do not focus on the relationship between nature and personal imagination.

Almost half of the 'new' poems in the sample of *Royal Readers* demonstrate the emphasis on narratives of historical events, deeds of war, personal bravery, and patriotism evident at that time. The extract from Shakespeare's *Henry V* ('Once more unto the breach [...]'), Campbell's 'The Battle of the Baltic', Cowper's 'The Loss of the Royal George' and Tennyson's 'Charge of the Light Brigade' celebrate aspects of war and patriotism, while others such as Daniel's 'The Bonfire of Craig-Gowan' and Campbell's 'Lochiel's Warning' focus on personal bravery associated with national conflict. Poems by Byron, Scott and Rogers describe events, places and people of the past. Wordsworth's 'Grace Darling' and Campbell's 'Napoleon and the English Sailor' describe individual deeds of valour. The editor's preoccupation with such serious and uplifting themes is confirmed by the inclusion of poems by H.G. Bell, George Croly, Thomas Dale, J.H. Gurney, Flora Hastings, Frances MacLellan, Charles Norton and Benjamin Webb listed in table 11.

Apart from the moral verses in the *Second* and *Third Readers*, much of the poetry comprised narratives written in ballad form. These would have been more readily accessible to children than the discursive and didactic poetry of the BFSS *Daily Lesson Books* and the *Irish Readers*. It was also a style of poetry suitable for elocution lessons and public recitation, practices much in vogue at that time.<sup>48</sup> Within this context, it is significant that Poe's work is represented in the *Royal*

*Readers* by 'The Bells', rather than by his more passionate and mysterious poems of Gothic Romanticism. Such strikingly musical poetry, exploiting the sounds and rhythms of the language, made only limited demands on children's understanding and was eminently suitable for elocution and recitation activities.

Considered as a whole, the poetry in this sample of the *Royal Readers* functioned as an instrument of social and national conditioning, presenting society's message to the young, exploiting emotions of pity or pride, ignoring the personal in favour of the public, entertaining with narrative in the traditional ballad style, maintaining a high level of seriousness and confirming established gender roles. The selection of poems and poets was more conservative than that in the *New Australian School Series*. And from a national point of view it was more limiting in that it maintained an emphasis on the 'rhetoric and sentiment of empire', and did not include Australian verse (Nelson 6). In these ways, the poetry in the *Royal Readers* epitomised the major functions and themes of the poetry read in classrooms during the previous six decades.

At the beginning of the century, Joseph Lancaster had included hymns and religious poetry in his lesson sheets to inculcate in youth:

a reverence for the sacred name of God [...]; a detestation of vice; a love of veracity; a due attention to duties to parents, relations and to society; carefulness to avoid bad company; civility without flattery; and a peaceable demeanour (viii-ix).

By the end of the century, although the variety of poetry included in elementary class readers had increased and the priority given to subjects and themes had changed, several of Lancaster's aims still held, as the titles of many poems in the *Royal Readers* testify. The difference between Lancaster's stated objectives and those expressed in the prefaces to the *Royal Readers* is significant, however. Lancaster stated his objectives explicitly, promoting reading as a means of giving children access to 'the Scriptures of Truth' (viii). The editors of the *Royal Readers* claimed that their lessons aimed 'not only at teaching *the art of reading*, but at training the pupils to *a love of reading*' (preface *RR IV* n.p.). This enjoyment was fostered, however, by the reading of poetry and prose often as didactic as that which Lancaster had selected for his pupils.

### **The canon of poets and poems studied in nineteenth-century Tasmanian elementary schools**

My analysis of the poetry in the sample of five sets of readers establishes the frequency with which 151 poets and almost 600 poems were available to be read and studied in Tasmanian classrooms during the nineteenth century. Adapting Fowler's terms, I consider these poets and poems as an 'accessible canon' of writers and works from which it is possible to establish the 'selective canon' of those favoured by different editors as the most appropriate for classroom study in the elementary school (215).

Table 13 presents this 'accessible canon' by listing the 151 poets included in all the class readers examined in this chapter, and also indicates the development of a 'selective canon' by noting the frequency with which individual poets appeared in the five sets of readers. Only William Cowper, Felicia Hemans, Mary Howitt, Shakespeare and Wordsworth appeared in each of these. Nine poets appeared in all but one set of readers: Thomas Campbell, S.T. Coleridge, Oliver Goldsmith, H.W. Longfellow, Charles Mackay, James Montgomery, Thomas Moore, Walter Scott and Robert Southey. Thirteen poets appeared in three sets of readers: Robert Burns, George Byron, Colley Cibber, Thomas Gray, Thomas Hood, Leigh Hunt, John Langhorne, John Milton, Samuel Rogers, P.B. Shelley, Ann Taylor, James Thompson and Nathaniel Willis. As shown in chapter 3, fewer than half of these 27 poets were included in the primary school poetry curriculum in the first half of the twentieth century. At the time, however, they were recognised writers who addressed popular subjects and themes that the readers' editors considered relevant to children's needs. The works of most of these writers were also included in two contemporary mainstream poetry anthologies. Only Mary Howitt, Charles Mackay, James Montgomery, John Langhorne, Ann Taylor and Nathaniel Willis did not have poems included in either Palgrave's *The Golden Treasury* or Quiller-Couch's *The Oxford Book of English Verse*.<sup>49</sup> A further 26 poets appeared in 2 of the readers and 98 in only 1. Many of these poets enjoyed only temporary reputations, while others such as William Blake, Robert Browning, Adam Lindsay Gordon, John Keats, Henry Kendall, Rudyard Kipling, Henry Lawson, A.B. Paterson, Edgar Allan Poe, R.L.



Stevenson, Alfred Tennyson and Walt Whitman strengthened their presence in primary school readers in the twentieth century.

The information in Table 13 shows the extent to which the editors of the class readers chose works by poets not represented in other readers in the sample, and could indicate the independent and original choices made by different editors. Only 23% of the poets in the *Australian Readers* did not feature in other sets, whereas 42% of those in the *Irish Readers*, 45% in the *Royal Readers* and 46% in the *New Australian School Series* were unique to those three sets. The English editor of the *Australian Readers* may well have collected much of his material from contemporary British school readers. In the case of the *Irish Readers*, the higher percentage of 'new' poets reflects a focus on Irish poetry, and the similar percentage in the *Royal Readers* results from that series' emphasis on patriotism and empire, over half the poems being devoted to these subjects. The high percentage for the *New Australian School Series* reflects the eclectic and wide-ranging choice of the editor and also the emerging popularity of Metaphysical, Romantic and Australian poetry.

Another means of examining the representation of these poets is to consider the number of their poems included in the sample of readers. Table 14 ranks the 27 poets who appeared in at least three of the sets of readers according to the number of their poems chosen for inclusion. On this basis, the 10 most significant poets in the nineteenth century Tasmanian primary school curriculum, in order of frequency, were Cowper, Shakespeare, Wordsworth, Scott, Thomas Campbell, Thomas Moore, James Montgomery, Felicia Hemans, Longfellow and Byron. The poets read most frequently in Tasmanian and British elementary schools during this period were almost identical. All of these poets, except Thomas Moore, appear in Ian Michael's list of the 13 most frequently represented poets in 114 British poetry anthologies published between 1802 and 1870, but in a different order (236). Cowper and Shakespeare hold first and second positions in both lists, but in Michael's list Campbell precedes both Wordsworth and Hemans, and Byron and Longfellow precede Montgomery. Alexander Pope is the only poet in Michael's list of most frequently represented poets who is not listed in Table 14 and whose poetry is not featured in any of the readers examined in this chapter. Rosemary Scott includes

Cowper, James Montgomery and Ann Taylor in her list of poets with more than three poems included in mid-Victorian anthologies of 'pious verse' (49-50).<sup>50</sup>

Table 14 also lists the 18 poems most frequently featured in the prescribed readers. The most popular of these were Wordsworth's 'The Pet Lamb', Byron's 'The Ocean', Longfellow's 'The Village Blacksmith' and 'The Psalm of Life', Shelley's 'The Cloud' and Cibber's 'The Blind Boy'. These 6 poems present themes that featured consistently in school poetry during the past sixty years: application to work, patient acceptance of life's circumstances, the power of nature, and kindness to animals. Given the relatively large number of poems by Cowper, Shakespeare, Wordsworth and Scott, it is interesting that only one of each writer's poems was included in at least three different readers. All editors obviously considered these poets sufficiently important to warrant strong representation, but, in each case, identified one poem that conveyed a theme matching editorial priorities. For similar reasons, editors agreed about the appeal of individual poems by several poets to whose works they gave very limited representation. The extreme examples of this are Shelley's 'The Cloud' and Cibber's 'The Blind Boy'. Both poems appeared in 4 sets of class readers, yet only 2 poems by Shelley were included in any of the readers, and only 1 by Cibber. These 2 poems and Wordsworth's 'The Pet Lamb' were not included in the twentieth-century class readers examined in chapter 3. Their omission from those readers signalled changing priorities in poetry subjects and themes.

In the introductions to their anthologies, both Palgrave and Quiller-Couch referred to the relationship between young people and poetry. Palgrave wrote that the 'magic of the art of poetry can confer '[e]xperience' on those of 'early years', and provide for all ages 'treasures "more golden than gold," leading us in higher and healthier ways than those of the world and interpreting to us the lessons of Nature' (7-8). Quiller-Couch stated that one of his aims was 'to implant' a love of poetry in 'young minds not yet initiated' (vii). It is instructive to consider the degree of importance accorded such aims in Tasmanian classrooms during the second half of the nineteenth century and what impact the poetry offered had on its readers. How was poetry taught and why? How effectively did children understand and appreciate the poems they read, memorised and recited? What qualities of understanding and appreciation of poetry did teachers bring to their task? Official documents of that time, students' literacy

levels and teachers' educational backgrounds provide possible answers to these questions.

### **The teaching of poetry**

The limited evidence about the teaching of poetry in Tasmanian elementary classrooms in the nineteenth century is found in the Department's official programs of instruction, comments made by inspectors in their annual reports, editors' introductions to some class readers, and teaching strategies outlined in several texts designed for teachers. Murray Burgess, Secretary of the Board of Education, included in his requisition for 1858 school texts an order for fifty copies of *An Introduction to the Art of Reading* (BoE 'Letterbooks' 70).<sup>51</sup> This text was essentially an introduction to elocution, providing teachers with such technical information about the reading aloud of both prose and poetry as the use of pace and pause, accentuation and intonation. It was a valuable teacher resource because of the high priority school inspectors gave to students' oral reading, public speaking and recitation skills. The fact that only two copies of the text were accounted for in the Annual Return of books issued to public schools in December 1858 suggests that teachers used it well (BoE 'Letterbooks' 645).

Comments in the prefaces of at least two of the classroom readers referred to poetry's value within the educational program and the method of its teaching, and followed closely those practices promoted by Lancaster in the first decade of the nineteenth century. In his preface to the *Third Irish Reader* (1845), William McDermott recommended 'that the Pupils be made to commit the best pieces of poetry to memory; and that they be taught to read and repeat them with due attention to pronunciation, accent, and emphasis' (iii). He did not define the attributes of these 'best pieces of poetry', but one assumes they included those features of rhyme, rhythm and language appropriate for vocal presentation and memorisation, and contained themes that reinforced the religious and moral norms of the time. The editor of the first secular reading book issued by the BFSS in 1840 claimed that this 'best' poetry was that which would 'improve the mind and character of the reader' because it dealt with 'loving and trustful feelings', encouraged 'the enjoyment of natural scenery' and cultivated a 'humble, contented, and domestic spirit' (3).

The contemporary text that provided the most detailed exposition of poetry teaching methods was the Irish Commissioners' *Selections from the British Poets*. Michael provides a useful summary of these procedures:

The class is to read poetry on at least one day in the week. The teacher reads the poem, part of its biographical introduction and part of the introduction to the group ('Sacred', 'Didactic and Moral', 'Descriptive') in which it comes. He explains the allusions and points out expressions that need to be emphasised in reading aloud; he explains the meaning of the poem and what the writer was trying to achieve. He then questions the class about the author's life and discusses what the critics have said about him. Only then 'each of the pupils should [...] be required to read, either the whole, or portion of the piece'. Recitation and further practice in reading aloud should follow, with more questioning on the vocabulary and grammar of the poem. (254)

Evidence suggests it was highly unlikely that such rigorous procedures were practised in Tasmanian elementary schools before the 1900s, and that if they were, they achieved minimal outcomes. That teachers were to expect pupils to memorise and recite poetry is confirmed, however, by the inclusion of Elocution as one of the eleven subjects in the curriculum of the short-lived Normal School for the training of teachers, established by Governor Denison in 1850 (Phillips 46).

The first official reference to poetry for Tasmanian elementary schools was made in the Board of Education's 1865 'Programme of Organisation and Instruction for Public Schools' (Phillips 41). This program defined the minimum standards of achievement in reading, writing and arithmetic for classes 1 to 6 and prescribed the *Irish Readers* to be used in each class. Poetry was mentioned only once in the program. In order to reach the required reading standard in the fifth class, pupils had to demonstrate the ability to read 'a few lines of poetry, or prose' from the class reader. This program was based on the English Revised Code of 1862, the only difference being that British pupils were not given the option of reading prose for their Standard 5 reading assessment (Curtis 259).<sup>52</sup> A slightly revised 'Programme of Instruction' was distributed to schools in 1869, to be displayed 'in a conspicuous place in the Schoolroom'. This listed 'Rhymes' among the additional subjects to be taught in Classes 1 and 2 (BoE 'Circulars' 6 August 1869). Then, in a revised 'Standard of Instruction' issued by the Director of Education at the beginning of 1886, 'Simple Poetry' was listed as one of the additional subjects for study in the first two classes, and 'Poetry' among such subjects for the other elementary grades

(DoE 'Circulars' 75).<sup>53</sup> The poetry referred to was obviously that included in the class readers, but the statement provided no indication of why or how the poetry was to be taught. Any local direction and guidance about these matters came from the school inspectors.

Inspectors did not refer to poetry in their reports until the late 1870s, and then only incidentally and within the context of their major concern that pupils should be able to read fluently, with expression and understanding. This emphasis on basic reading skills dominated inspectors' reports from the 1850s when Thomas Arnold first tested reading in schools throughout the State. Inspectors measured pupils' literacy skills by hearing them read aloud and questioning them on the content of the passages read. Their reports suggest that they paid as much attention to the nature of the oral reading as to the understanding of what was read, perhaps believing that the standard of children's oral work reflected their level of comprehension. In 1861, Inspector Stephens found it 'difficult to exaggerate the importance' of the 'art of reading with intelligence and facility', and deplored 'a rapid style of reading without '[d]istinct enunciation of every syllable' (*LCP* 7, 1862, Paper 12: 15). Inspector Murray Burgess reported in 1870 that the chief weakness in pupils' reading was 'defective articulation' (*LCP* 16, 1870, Paper 18: 21). Writing of the testing of reading in 1876, Stephens declared:

a Teacher who only secures [from his pupils] deliberate and distinct articulation, with a fair amount of intelligence, will always obtain high credit. The old adage is worth remembering:-  
"Learn to read slow: all other graces  
Will follow in their proper places." (*LCP* 23, 1876,  
Paper 21: 28)

In 1878, Stephens claimed that reading in both public and private schools 'rarely rises above mediocrity' and resigned himself to the fact that for the present, 'an Inspector must be content if children can pronounce the words of their reading lessons without hesitation, and if they fairly know their meaning' (*LCP* 27, 1878, Paper 28: 9).

James Rule was the first inspector to make frequent incidental references to the teaching of poetry in his annual reports. His 1878 report noted that rhymes were 'learnt in several schools, but taught in few', and that their 'value in improving

articulation and expression' was generally overlooked. He saw benefit in prescribing poetry for senior classes and teaching it 'properly' (*LCP* 27, 1878, Paper 28:17). In his Annual Report for the following year, Rule expressed concern about the nature of the poetry taught in classrooms. Because no specific poetry was mentioned in the Programme of Instruction and Rule believed the selections in the lesson books were not 'suitable', he claimed that the 'unsectarian nature' of some schools was 'endangered' because teachers used hymns as a source of rhymes and songs. He recommended that suitable 'verse and song-books' be prescribed for schools and no others allowed for use without the Board's express approval' (*LCP* 28, 1879, Paper 27: 13). There is no evidence that his recommendation was adopted. In 1881 Rule continued to report that the 'proper use of rhymes and poetry in schools [was] unappreciated, except by a few teachers' (*LCP* 31, 1881, Paper 33: 12). Inspector Doran's 1882 Annual Report commended the general fluency and accuracy of the reading in 'nearly all the schools' he examined, but noted that it was 'marked by a general want of intelligence and expression'. In particular, he was concerned about deficiencies in the expressive reading of poetry 'in the higher classes' (*LCP* 35, 1883, Paper 88: 15). This deficiency continued to be a matter of concern for the rest of that decade. In 1889, Rule reported that

Rhymes and poetry receive due attention in only a minority of schools. Most teachers ignore their value even as a means of cultivating clear articulation, and are content to hear children repeat verses in a manner little better than gabble. (Quoted by Hudson 90)

The most complimentary report about poetry teaching in schools was that by Inspector Lovell in 1892. Noting the need to improve the standard of oral reading in schools by 'pattern' and 'simultaneous' reading, and echoing one point made by Lancaster at the beginning of the century, he wrote:

The repetition from memory of suitable poetry, by preference simultaneously, may also be made a means of cultivating expression: and it is satisfactory to find that this exercise receives a very fair share of attention, and that the recitation of poetry is at least marked by an absence of that sing-song style once so prevalent that it used to be looked upon as quite the correct thing. (*JPP* 28, 1893, Paper 35: 14)<sup>54</sup>

Inspectors' infrequent comments on poetry in their annual reports confirm that the teaching of poetry had little status in the curriculum of Tasmanian schools in the nineteenth century. Poetry was not one of the twelve subjects listed on the

Department's official inspection form used by inspectors to report to the Director on the performance of students in the schools they visited. Inspector Masters's Inspection Report on Sister's Creek School of 11 October 1899, for example, provided assessments on student performance in Reading, Writing (including Spelling), Arithmetic, Grammar, Geography, History, Elementary Science and General Knowledge, Drawing, Singing, Needlework, Drill and Physical Education, and Moral Culture. He apparently chose not to comment about, perhaps not even to test, the reading or recitation of poetry. Within the context of a belief in the moral efficacy of poetry, it is interesting that Masters recorded that the teaching of moral culture at Sister's Creek school appeared good 'but with little appreciable result' (DoE 'Inspection Reports'). Apparently the moral content of the poetry in the school readers had little impact of children's behaviour. Inspector Rule also made occasional comments about the teaching of poetry in his individual schools reports, but these comments were summative in nature and within the context of reading rather than poetry as a specific subject. His inspection report on the Oatlands School of 23 September 1891 noted that with 'the exception of feeble expression in Reading and Poetry', the work of the first and second classes was generally satisfactory; while his report on Lower Longley school of 2 December that year described as 'good' the reading and poetry in classes 3, 4 and 5 (DoE 'Inspection Reports').

During these fifty years, poetry was included in school readers to be decoded, memorised and recited, rather than to be appreciated as literature. In their reports, Inspectors made no comments about students' personal responses to the poems read or their appreciation of themes and ideas. This is surprising considering the highly didactic and moral nature of much of the poetry in the readers and their editors' belief that it would improve children's character and behaviour. Any 'taste' for poetry and enthusiasm for its meaning and artistry would, one assumes, have been acquired by a process of osmosis, or as a result of the personal interest and commitment of individual teachers. Roy Bridges, for example, records that his teacher, Miss Jessie Andrews, 'had scholarship and the high gifts of humour, imagination and love of literature' and that her 'reading of great poetry' encouraged his knowledge of Tennyson and 'love' of Kendall (169). On the other hand, W.C. Morris recalls that the teaching of poetry at Barrington State School did not extend 'beyond the developing of a mechanical skill in the art of reading' and that 'the

treatment of the subject was negative' (17). The evidence available about the literacy levels of the majority of students and most teachers' educational qualifications and experience, however, suggests that it would be unreasonable to expect attention to have been given to more than basic reading skills in many classrooms.

The Chief Inspector of schools stated in 1874 that children leaving school without having reached the standard required for class 4 (including the ability 'to read the Fourth Book with tolerable fluency [...] and spell correctly an ordinary passage from the same book') could not 'be said, in any sense, to have been educated up to a satisfactory standard' (*LCP* 20, 1874, Paper 14: 25). On this basis, it is revealing to examine inspectors' assessments of children's performance levels during the last decades of the century. In 1869, Inspector Burgess reported that 72% of students were performing at class 2 standard or below (*LCP* 16, 1870, Paper 18: 21). In relation to poetry, this meant that the majority of students were experiencing no poetry beyond that in the first two *Irish Readers*. Four years later, 64% of the children were classified as achieving no more than this level and only 6% were capable of reading material at the levels of classes 5 and 6 (*LCP* 20, 1874, Paper 14: 24). In 1878, 19% of pupils in schools examined by Inspector Stevens had reached class 3 standard or above in reading (*LCP* 27, 1878, Paper 28: 13). The second class of students was reported in the following year as comprising 'usually the largest class' in schools with 65% of students reaching no more than this standard of achievement (*LCP* 28, 1879, Paper 27: 9). Inspector Rule's 1881 report on the reading performance of children in schools in the Northern District showed that 28% of children examined were below the full class 1 standard, 24% had reached this standard, 22% that of standard 2, 15% standard 3, 7% standard 4, 3% standard 5, and 0.5% standard 6 (*LCP* 31, 1881, Paper 33: 11). These performances bear some relationship to performances of schools supervised by the Commissioners of National Education in Ireland. In 1865, Commissioners reported that 42% of students in Irish schools showed proficiency in the lessons in the *First Reader*, 27% in lessons in the *Second Reader*, 10% in the *Sequel to the Second Reader* and 7% in the *Fourth Reader* and above.<sup>55</sup>

Inspectors' reports at the end of the century indicated only a very slow improvement in children's reading skills. In 1898 and 1899 Inspector Lovell reported that



approximately 87% of the students in his district were performing at class 3 standard or below, approximately 9% had achieved satisfactory levels in reading at class 4, and only 4% of students at any levels beyond this. In both years, Lovell found that only 0.5% of students had reached the class 6 standard (*JPP* 39, 1898, Paper 36: 12; and *JPP* 41, 1899, Paper 13: 13). In his first year as an inspector in 1899, Inspector Garrett reported slightly higher results: 40% of students at class 1 or below, 20% achieving class 2 standard, 18% class 3, 12 % class 4 and 10% above this (*JPP* 43, 1900, Paper 12: 12). On this basis, approximately 60% of children had neither the ability nor the opportunity to read poetry other than the simple rhymes and verses contained in the first two class readers.

### **Poetry and the training of teachers**

In his 1874 report, the Chief Inspector drew attention to ‘the generally low standard of efficiency’ of teachers, particularly their ‘want of diligence’ and ‘imperfect knowledge of the practical business of [their] profession’ (*LCP* 20, 1874, Paper 14: 25). It is clear that this ‘imperfect knowledge’ included poetry. The majority of teachers had little knowledge of poetry other than that gained during their own elementary education. There was no pre-service training facility for teachers in Tasmania during the century. As early as 1839, Governor Franklin had adopted a pragmatic approach to the problem of recruiting teachers. People who expressed an interest in teaching, for whatever reason, demonstrated basic competence in literacy and numeracy and could produce character testimonials were appointed (Phillips 45). Because of his concern about the qualifications and abilities of teachers, Thomas Arnold encouraged the Board of Education to introduce examinations for people applying for teacher positions. These proved a useful screening device. He reported in 1855 that few applicants for positions were ‘possessed of real professional qualifications’ and that the ‘preliminary examination required of candidates by the Board’ had the ‘excellent effect’ of deterring ‘more than one incompetent person from applying’ (Phillips 48). When Thomas Stephens was appointed Inspector of Schools for the Northern Region two years later, he observed that, apart from two or three teachers ‘introduced from the Mother Country’ who were doing ‘excellent work’ and a ‘few others, not specially trained, but possessing that natural aptitude for teaching and management which is the best of all qualifications’, the remainder were mostly ‘persons whose only qualification was that they had never attempted any

other business [...] or who had been placed in their present positions from mistaken motives of charity' (1). In his 1874 Annual Report, he recorded that of the 127 teachers employed by the Board of Education, 8 had trained in England, 17 had achieved certificates of competency under the supervision of schools and inspectors, and 13 were working towards such achievement. Of the remaining 89 teachers, 24 were 'well qualified' for their positions either by education or experience, but just over half were classified as probationers (*LCP* 20, 1874, Paper 14: 25).

With Thomas Arnold's support, Governor Denison attempted to meet the need to train teachers by establishing a Normal School in the early 1850s, but the project failed despite efforts to sustain it by reducing the age of entry from eighteen to fourteen and providing free board and tuition (Howell 17-18). Between 1851 and 1855, Arnold introduced a scheme of teaching apprenticeships and then a pupil-teacher system. On appointment, pupil-teachers had to be at least thirteen years of age, pass a preliminary examination and satisfy character requirements by submitting appropriate testimonials. They worked in classrooms under the direction of approved teachers who were required to devote an hour and a half daily out of school hours to their instruction. Their course of study extended over five years and included 'the whole range of primary school subjects, together with instruction in teaching skills' (Howell 31). Pupil-teachers were not eligible for appointment as teachers until they had reached the age of eighteen and had passed the annual examinations, which included the ability to repeat a set number of consecutive lines of poetry from 'some standard English poet with just expression and knowledge of the meaning' ('Circulars' 20 March 1865).

Pupil-teacher Regulations issued by the Board of Education in 1869 included examination requirements that candidates should each year demonstrate an ability to read fluently 'with improved articulation, tone and expression'; at the end of their second year the ability to write from dictation a passage from the 4<sup>th</sup> [class reader] and to repeat fifty consecutive lines of poetry; at the end of the third year to write lesson notes on a subject selected by the Inspector and repeat one hundred lines of poetry ('Circulars' 5 May 1869). These regulations were revised and expanded in 'Regulations for the Employment of Pupil Teachers and Paid Monitors' issued in 1889. At the end of the second year of training, pupil-teachers now had to recite a

passage of fifty lines of poetry and demonstrate knowledge of it by answering questions on its general meaning and specific allusions. As well as reciting and responding in a similar manner to one hundred lines of poetry at the end of the third and fourth years, pupil-teachers had to paraphrase 'a short passage of poetry' ('Circulars' 25 May 1889). By the 1890s, the passages of poetry to be memorized were almost always prescribed by the inspectors and announced in advance. These poems were usually from the fourth or fifth class reader and included Macaulay's 'The Armada' (1893), Scott's 'The Battle of Flodden' (1895), Gray's 'Elegy in a Country Churchyard' (1896) and Browning's 'How They Brought the good News from Ghent to Aix' (1897). Occasionally, such as in 1898, candidates were permitted to make their own choice of poem. The examination papers on grammar often included a stanza from a poem which candidates were expected to parse, analyse and paraphrase. The poem in the paper for third-year pupil-teachers in 1900, for example, was the opening six lines of Scott's 'Love of Country' ('Examination Papers for Pupil Teachers'). The pupil-teacher system and the annual examinations remained the major means of training teachers until the Teacher Training College was opened in 1906.

In the early 1870s, Stephens addressed the problems of training unqualified teachers who were already in charge of classes and of providing promotion opportunities for qualified staff. He introduced a system of teacher classification that included a series of formal examinations in both subject disciplines and educational practice, which increased in difficulty according to the level of classification sought. These examinations tested teachers' abilities as readers and writers, and their knowledge of subjects such as History, Geography, Arithmetic, Grammar, Euclid and Algebra. One of the annual examination papers was titled 'School Books' and tested candidates' knowledge of the material in the class readers and the methods they would use to teach this material. This paper invariably included at least one question on the poems from the readers; the Grammar paper often did the same. Relevant questions on the 1885 papers included one expecting candidates to paraphrase fourteen lines from Milton's *Paradise Lost*, and two others:

Give in prose the substance of Cowper's "Boadicea" explaining the principal allusions.

Write out with short explanatory notes either the stanza beginning “The Flying Mede” or the speech beginning “Farewell, a long farewell to all my greatness”. (Examination Papers for Teachers’ 1885) <sup>56</sup>

In 1892, the Minister of Education issued revised regulations for the appointment and classification of teachers. These maintained the annual examinations in a range of subjects, including ‘School Books’, but added an examination on ‘English Language and Literature’ for classification at the highest level. Typical of questions about poetry in these two subjects during the next eight years were those asking candidates to name the authors of a list of poems, and to give ‘concisely the meaning of the following extracts, making reference where necessary to the context, and explaining all historical and geographical allusions [...]’ (1893); or, in 1894, to ‘Explain the allusions intended by the italicised words in the following passages [...]’. [The passages cited included lines from Byron’s ‘The Ocean’, Scott’s *Marmion* and Longellow’s ‘Wreck of the Hesperus’.] (‘Examination Papers for Teachers 1893, 1894)

Evidence presented to a Select Committee of Parliament in 1882 included a claim that the standard of teachers’ qualifications did not rise to the level of the fifth and sixth class of the students they taught (Phillips 80). Inspector Rule confirmed that this was not an exaggerated claim when he wrote in his 1889 Annual Report that the low standards achieved by students were

mainly due to the low standard of qualifications prescribed for probationary teachers, and to the fact of a large percentage of the country schools being managed by such teachers, whose attainments, in many cases, are not higher than the standards of instructions for Fifth Class pupils. (*JPP* 20, 1890, Paper 73:10)

It is clear that many teachers did not undertake the examinations for classification and promotion and that the majority of teachers therefore may not have possessed any knowledge of poetry or other school subjects beyond that in the school readers. The Director noted in his reports of 1890 and 1892 that the proportion of uncertificated teachers in schools was ‘large’ and regretted that there ‘was still so great a preponderance of those who [...] failed from one cause or another to qualify themselves for a certificate of competency’ (*JPP* 20, 1890, Paper 73: 7; and *JPP* 26, 1892, Paper 50:7). Neale’s report on education in 1904 confirmed that 350 of the 500

teachers employed by the Department had had no formal training (*JPP* 51, 1904, Paper 49:18).

From 1841 until the end of the century, the major task facing the Tasmanian Board of Education and, subsequently, the Education Department was to improve the literacy levels of elementary pupils. Teaching was based on prescribed class readers that included passages of prose and poetry. The poetry was read, memorised and recited to improve oral and reading skills and to inculcate Christian principles and appropriate social behaviour. At this stage, then, its purpose was essentially functional and didactic. Poetry's status within education changed significantly in 1905 when Neale was appointed Director of Education and implemented a revised primary school curriculum based on the tenets of the 'New Education'.

## TABLES

### I

#### Poems in the BFSS *Daily Lesson Book III* (1849)

POET	POEM	IRISH READERS
Anon/Unattributed	'My Neighbour'	
	'The Truth'	
	'Heart's-Ease'	
	'White Stork'	
Abbott, G.D. (? - ?)	'Sabbath Bell'	
Bowles, William (1762-1850)	'Stanzas'	
Brainerd, David (1718-47)	'The Deep'	
Bryant, William C. (1794-1878)	'To a Water-fowl'	5 <sup>th</sup> Irish
	'The Wood'	
	'Dead Traveller'	
	'Pitcairn's Island'	
	'Death of Flowers'	
Coleridge, S.T. (1772-1834)	'Friendship'	
Cornwall, Barry (1787-1874)	'The Stormy Petrel'	3 <sup>rd</sup> Irish 1878
Cottle, Joseph (1770-1853)	'Robin Redbreast'	
Cowper, William (1731-1800)	'Ancient Britons' 'Christian Peasant' 'Slavery' 'Commerce' 'The Wagoner' 'The Fire-side' 'A Comparison' 'Vanity' 'Liberty' 'The Woodman' 'Cruelty to Animals' 'Defaced Alcove' 'Retirement' 'Wisdom' 'Britain'	4 <sup>th</sup> Irish
Crabbe, George (1754-1832)	'Prayer'	
Dana, Richard, H. (1815-82)	'Invitation to Christ' 'The Sea'	
Doane, George W. (1799-1859)	'The Eagle'	
Edmeston, James (1791-1867)	'Feed my Lambs'	
Garrison, W.G. (? - ?)	'The Free Mind'	
Gisborne, Thomas (1758-1846)	'The Worm'	
Gould, Hannah (1789-1865)	'Song of the Bees'	
Heber, Reginald (1773-1826)	'Missionary Hymn'	3 <sup>rd</sup> Irish 1845 3 <sup>rd</sup> Irish 1851
Hemans, Felicia (1793-1835)	'Birds of Passage'  'The Deep'	3 <sup>rd</sup> Irish 1845 3 <sup>rd</sup> Irish 1878
Johnson, Samuel (1709-84)	'Water-Drinker'	
Knox, Vicesimus (1752-1821)	'Time Speeds Away'	
Milton, John (1608-74)	'Early Morning'	
Montgomery, James (1771-1854)	'Birds' 'Night' 'Aspirations' 'The Seasons'	

POET	POEM	IRISH READERS
	'Home Comforts'	
Moodie, Susanna (1803-85)	Traveller's Return'	
<b>Moore, Thomas</b> (1779-1852)	'Evening Bells' 'Mutability of Love'	
<b>Opie, Amelia</b> (1769-1853)	'Hymn'	
<b>Rogers, Samuel</b> (1763-1855)	'The Dog'	
<b>Shakespeare</b> (1564-1616)	'Mercy'	
<b>Sigourney, Lydia</b> (1791-1865)	'The School'	
Smith, Charlotte (1749-1806)	'Humming Bird'	
<b>Southey, Robert</b> (1774-1843)	'The Elephant' 'War'	
Strickland, Agnes (1796-1874)	'The Life-boat'	
<b>Thomson, James</b> (1700-48)	'Health' 'Exercise'	
<b>Wilcox, Carlos</b> (?- ?)	'Sultry Noon' 'Way to be Happy' ' <b>Benevolence</b> '	5 <sup>th</sup> Irish
<b>Willis, Nathaniel</b> (1806-67)	'Ardent Spirit' 'Saturday Afternoon' 'Happiness' 'Wine'	
<b>Wordsworth, W.</b> (1770-1850)	'Infidelity' 'Pride' 'The Sky-lark'	

Names and titles in **bold type** are those poets and poems included in the *Irish Readers*.

Poetry content in a sample of *Irish Readers*

READER	NO. OF POEMS	NO. OF PROSE LESSONS	% OF POETRY
Book 2 (1850)	14	70	17
Sequel to Bk. 2 (1851)	6	64	9
Book 3 (1845)	38	65	37
Book 3 (1851)	18	84	18
Book 3 (1878)	36	78	32
Book 4 (1849)	14	80	15
Book 5 (1849)	30	88	25



Poets with one poem included a sample of *Irish Readers*

POET	POEM
Addison, Joseph (1762-1819)	'Creation' [3, 1878]
Akenside, Mark (1721-1770)	'Taste' [5, 1849]
Balfour, Clara (1808 -1878)	'Lines Sent to the Irish Harp Society' [3, 1845]
Barbault, Anna (1743-1824)	'The Laplander' [3, 1845/1851]
Barton, Bernard (1784- 1849)	'Irish Maiden's Song' [3, 1878]
<b>Bryant, William</b> (1794-1878)	<b>'To a Waterfowl'</b> [5, 1849]
Byrom, John (1692-1763)	'Let Thy Repentance be Without Delay' [Sequel 2, 1851]
Carter Elizabeth (1717-1816)	'On a Watch' [3, 1845]
Caswell, Edward (1814-1878)	'Captive Linnet' [3, 1878]
<b>Cornwall, Barry</b> (1787-1874)	<b>'The Stormy Petrel'</b> [3, 1878]
Cunningham, John (1729-1773)	'Day: A Pastoral' [3, 1845]
Dufferin, Lady (1807-1867)	'Lament of the Irish Emigrant' [3, 1878]
Edmeston, James (1791-1867)	'The Death of the Just' [3, 1845]
Goldsmith, Oliver (1730- 1774)	'Auburn' [4, 1849]
<b>Gould, Hannah</b> (1789-1865)	'The Snow Flake' [5, 1849]
Grahame, James (1765-1811)	'The Day of Rest' [4, 1849]
Gray, James (1770-1830)	'Scotland' [3, 1845]
Hervey, Thomas K (1799-1859)	'The Convict Ship' [5, 1849]
Hogg, James (1792-1862)	'Blessed be Thy Name' [4, 1849]
Hurdis, James (1763-1801)	'A Bird's Nest' [4, 1849]
Langhorne, John (1735-1779)	'To a Redbreast' [2, 1852]
Mackay, Charles (1814-1889)	'Daily Work' [3, 1878]
Marsden, John H. (1803-1891)	'What is Time?' [4, 1878]
Montrose/Graham James (1612-1650)	'The Finding of Moses' [3, 1845]
Neele, Henry (1798-1828)	'The Silent Glen' [5, 1849]
Newton, John (1725-1807)	'The Kite, or Pride Must have a Fall' [3, 1878]
<b>Opie, Amelia</b> (1769-1853)	'The Orphan Boy' [3, 1845/1851]
Pollock [Pollok], Robert (1799-1827)	'True Liberty' [5, 1849]
<b>Sigourney, Lydia H.</b> (1791-1865)	'The Coral Insect' [5, 1849]
<b>Southey, Robert</b> (1774-1843)	'The Battle of Blenheim' [3, 1845]
<b>Thomson, James</b> (1700-1748)	'Snow' [5, 1849]
<b>Wilcox, Carlos</b> (?-?)	<b>'Christian Benevolence'</b> [5, 1849]
Wilkie, William (1721-1772)	'The Boy and the Rainbow' [3, 1845]
Wolfe, Charles (1791-1823)	'Burial of Sir John Moor' [3, 1878]

Entries in **bold type** indicate those poets and poems included in the BFSS *Daily Lesson Book III*. References in the square brackets following the titles of the poems refer to the readers and editions in which the poems were published.

Poets represented more than once in a sample of *Irish Readers*

POETS	POEMS
Beattie, James (1735-1803)	'The Good Alone are Great' [3,1848] 'On the Effects of Time and Change' [5,1849]
Campbell, Thomas (1777-1844)	'The Harper and His Dog' [3,1845/1851/1878] 'The Soldier's Dream' [3,1878] 'The Exile of Erin' [3,1878] 'Ye Mariners of England' [3,1878] 'Battle of Hohenlinden' [3,1878] 'Gertrude of Wyoming' [5,1849]
Cowper, William (1731-1800)	'The Nightingale & the Glow-worm' [3,1845] 'Human Frailty' [3,1845/1878] 'Verses Supposed to be Written by Alexander Selkirk' [3,1845/1851/1878] 'The Cricket' [3,1878] 'God, the Author of Nature' [4,1849] 'On Cruelty to Animals' [4, 1849] 'Structure of Insects' [4,1849] 'Providence' [4,1849] 'The Benefits of Affliction' [5,1849] 'The Post Arrives in the Village' [5,1849] 'Report of an Adjudge Case' [5,1849] 'Mutual Forbearance Necessary to the Happiness of the Married State' [5,1849]
Gay, John (1685-1732)	'The Hare and Many Friends' [3,1845] 'The Butterfly and the Snail' [3,1845]
Heber, Reginald (1773-1826)	'Spread of the Gospel' [3,1845/1851] 'Christ's Second Coming' [4,1849]
Hemans, Felicia (1793-1835)	'The Birds' [3,1845/1878] 'Birds of Passage' [3,1845/1878] 'The Homes of England' [3,1845]
Howitt, Mary (1799-1888)	'The Sea' [3,1845] 'The Camel' [Sequel 2,1851]
Logan, John (1748-1788)	'To the Cuckoo' [3,1845] 'A Prayer' [3,1845]
Longfellow, H.W. (1807-1882)	'Sand of the Desert in an Hour-glass' [3,1878] 'A Psalm of Life' [3,1878] 'The Village Blacksmith' [3,1878]
Merrick, James (1720-1760)	'The Bears and the Bees' [3,1845] 'The Chameleon' [3,1845]
Milton, John (1608-1674)	'The sounds and seas . . . [4,1849] 'On His Blindness' [5,1849] 'Many are the sayings of the wise . . . [5,1849]
Montgomery, James (1771-1854)	'Protection and Guidance Supplicated' [3,1845] 'The Common Lot' [3,1845] 'On the Loss of Friends' [3,1878] 'A Voyage Round the World' [4,1849] 'The Saviour' [4,1849]
Moore, Thomas (1779-1852)	'A Hebrew Melody' [3,1845/1851] 'Canadian Boat Song' [3,1878] 'The Dove' [3,1878] 'Come Not, O Love' [3,1878]

POETS	POEMS
	'On Music' [3,1878] 'Thou art, O God' [3,1878] 'Go Where Glory Waits Thee' [3,1878] 'The Meeting of the Waters' [3,1878] 'The Poet to his Country' [3,1878] 'Sound the Loud Timbrel' [3,1878] 'The World is all a Fleeting Show' [3,1878]
Scott, Walter (1771-1832)	'Hymn of the Hebrew Maid' [3,1845/1878] 'Love of Country' [3,1845/1878] 'The Last Minstrel' [5,1849]
<b>Shakespeare, W. (1564-1616)</b>	'Now, my co-mates, and brothers in exile' [5,1849] 'What you do/Still betters what is done' [5,1849] 'Let me play the fool' [5,1849] 'A fool, - a fool!' [5,1849] 'Seems, madam! nay, it is' [5,1849] 'Why have those banished and forbidden legs' [5,1849]
Watts, Isaac (1674 – 1748)	'Against Quarrelling and Fighting' [3,1845] 'The Sluggard' [3,1845/1851] 'On Industry' [2,1852]
<b>Wordsworth, W. (1770 – 1850)</b>	'The Pet Lamb' [3,1845/1851/1878] 'The Cuckoo' [Sequel 2,1851]
Young, Edward (1681-1756)	'The Bell strikes one . . .' [4,1849] 'Procrastination' [5,1849]

Entries in **bold type** indicate those poets and poems included in the *BFSS Daily Lesson Book III*. References in the square brackets following the titles of the poems refer to the reader and edition in which the poems were published.

Poets and poems included in three editions of the *Third Irish Reader*

POET	1845	1851	1878
Anon./Un-attributed	'The First-born of Egypt' 'My Father's at the Helm' 'To a Dying Infant' 'The Spectacles'	'A Minute' 'Against Pride in Clothes' 'The Two Gardens' 'The Gleaner' 'The Tempest' 'Morning' 'Evening' 'On Prayer' 'Heaven or the Better Land' 'The Northern Seas'	
Addison, J.			'Creation'
Balfour, C.	'Lines to Irish Harp Society'		
Barbauld, A.	'The Laplander'	'The Laplander'	
Barton, B.			'Irish Maiden's Song'
Beattie, J.	'The Good Alone are Great'		
Campbell, T.	'The Harper & his Dog'	'The Harper & his Dog'	'The Harper & his Dog' 'The Soldier's Dream' 'The Exile of Erin' 'Ye Mariners' of England' 'Battle of Hohenlinden'
Carter, E.	'On a Watch'		
Caswell, E.			'Captive Linnet'
Cornwall, B.			'The stormy Petrel'
Cowper, W.	'The Nightingale & the Glow-worm' 'Human Frailty' 'Selkirk'	'Selkirk'	'The Cricket' 'Human Frailty' 'Selkirk'
Cunningham, J.	'Day: A Pastoral'		
Dufferin, H.			'Lament of the Irish Emigrant'
Edmeston, J.	'The Death of the Just'		
Gay, J.	'The Hare and Many Friends' 'The Butterfly and the Snail'		
Gray, J.	'Scotland'		
Heber, R.	'Spread of the Gospel'	'Spread of the Gospel'	
Hemans, F.	'The Birds' 'The Homes of England' 'Birds of Passage'		'The Birds'  'Birds of Passage'
Howitt, M.	'The Sea'		
Logan, J.	'To the Cuckoo' 'A Prayer'		
Longfellow, H.W.			'Sand of the Desert in an Hour-glass' 'A Psalm of Life'

POET	1845	1851	1878
			'The Village Blacksmith'
Mackay, C.			'Daily Work'
Merrick, J.	'The Bears and the Bees' 'The Chameleon'		
Montgomery, J.	'Protection and Guidance Supplicated' 'The Common Lot'		'On the Loss of Friends'
Montrose, J.	'The Finding of Moses'		
Moore, T.	'A Hebrew Melody'	'A Hebrew Melody'	'A Hebrew Melody' 'Canadian Boat Song' 'The Dove' 'Come Not, O Love' 'On Music' 'Thou art, O God' 'Go Where the Glory Waits Thee' 'The Meeting of the Waters' 'The Poet to his Country' 'The World is all a Fleeting Show'
Newton, J.			'The Kite or Pride must have a Fall'
Opie, A.	'The Orphan Boy'	'The Orphan Boy'	
Scott, W.	'Hymn of the Hebrew Maid' 'Love of Country'		'Hymn of the Hebrew Maid' 'Love of Country'
Southey, R.	'The Battle of Blenheim'		
Watts, I.	'The Sluggard' 'Against Quarrelling'	'The Sluggard'	
Wilkie, W.	'The Boy and the Rainbow'		
Wolfe, C.			'Burial of Sir John Moore'
Wordsworth, W.	'The Pet Lamb'	'The Pet Lamb'	'The Pet Lamb'

Poets and poems in **bold type** are those that appeared in the BFSS *Daily Lesson Book III*.

Poetry content in the *Australian Readers*

READER	NO. OF POEMS	NO. OF PROSE LESSONS	% OF POETRY
Book 1	11	53	17
Book 2	18	70	20
Book 3	8	51	14
Book 4	13	49	21
Book 5 (Boys)	47	99	32
Book 5 (Girls)	54	108	33

Felicia Heman's 'Morning Song' appeared twice in the fifth reader for girls (pages 143 and 254).

Poets and poems included in the *Australian Readers*

POET	POEM	READER(S)	PRIOR ENTRY
<b>Akenside, Mark</b>	'Inscription at Runnymede'	5 <sup>th</sup> B, 5 <sup>th</sup> G	
Alford, Henry	'Peace'	5 <sup>th</sup> B, 5 <sup>th</sup> G	
Aytoun, W.E.	'The Battle of Killiecrankie'	5 <sup>th</sup> B	
Browning, Elizabeth B.	'Victoria's Tears'	5 <sup>th</sup> G	
Bruce, James	'The Cuckoo'	5 <sup>th</sup> B, 5 <sup>th</sup> G	
Burns, Robert	'To a Mountain Daisy'	5 <sup>th</sup> G	
Byron, Lord	'Apostrophe to the Ocean'	4 <sup>th</sup> , 5 <sup>th</sup> B, 5 <sup>th</sup> G	
	'The Plain of Marathon'	5 <sup>th</sup> B, 5 <sup>th</sup> G	
	'The Eve of Waterloo'	5 <sup>th</sup> B	
	'Ancient & Modern Greece'	5 <sup>th</sup> B, 5 <sup>th</sup> G	
	'Mazeppa's Death Ride'	5 <sup>th</sup> B	
	'The Shipwreck'	5 <sup>th</sup> B	
	'The Colosseum'	5 <sup>th</sup> G	
<b>Campbell, Thomas</b>	'The Genius of Exploration'	5 <sup>th</sup> B, 5 <sup>th</sup> G	
	'The Hope of the World'	5 <sup>th</sup> B, 5 <sup>th</sup> G	
	'The Parrot'	5 <sup>th</sup> G	
<u>Coleridge, S.T.</u>	'Before Sunrise in the Vale of Chamouni'	5 <sup>th</sup> B	
	'Youth and Age'	5 <sup>th</sup> G	
Cook, Eliza	'The First Voyage'	5 <sup>th</sup> B, 5 <sup>th</sup> G	
	'The Old Arm Chair'	5 <sup>th</sup> G	
<b>Cowper, William</b>	'Boadicea'	3 <sup>rd</sup>	
	'Winter'	4 <sup>th</sup>	
	'The Martyrs'	5 <sup>th</sup> B	
	'To a Young Lady'	5 <sup>th</sup> G	
	'On the Receipt of his Mother's Picture'	5 <sup>th</sup> G	
Cutter, G.W.	'The Song of Steam'	3 <sup>rd</sup> , 4 <sup>th</sup> , 5 <sup>th</sup> B, 5 <sup>th</sup> G	
Daniel, Samuel	'Epistle to Countess Cumberland'	5 <sup>th</sup> B	
<b>Goldsmith, Oliver</b>	'Swiss Life'	5 <sup>th</sup> G	
	'Different Countries Compared'	4 <sup>th</sup>	
Gray, Thomas	'Pleasures Arising from Vicissitude'	5 <sup>th</sup> B, 5 <sup>th</sup> G	
<b>Hemans, Felicia</b>	'Morning Song'	5 <sup>th</sup> B, 5 <sup>th</sup> G	
	'Casabianca'	2 <sup>nd</sup>	
Herrick, Robert	'To Blossoms'	5 <sup>th</sup> B	
Hood, Thomas	'The Song of the Shirt'	5 <sup>th</sup> G	
<b>Howitt, Mary</b>	'Father is Coming'	2 <sup>nd</sup>	
Hunt, Leigh	'The Bitter Gourd – An Eastern Story'	5 <sup>th</sup> B, 5 <sup>th</sup> G	
	'Jaffar – an Eastern Tradition'	5 <sup>th</sup> B, 5 <sup>th</sup> G	
Kendall, Henry	'The Last of His Tribe'	3 <sup>rd</sup>	
Knowles, J.S.	'Tell's Address to his Native Mountains'	5 <sup>th</sup> B	
Lee, F.G.	'The Church Bell'	5 <sup>th</sup> G	
<b>Longfellow, H.W.</b>	'The Wreck of the "Hesperus"'	4 <sup>th</sup>	
	'Sand of the Desert in an Hour-Glass'	5 <sup>th</sup> B, 5 <sup>th</sup> G	3 <sup>rd</sup> Irish ('78)
	'Resignation'	5 <sup>th</sup> B, 5 <sup>th</sup> G	
	'A Psalm of Life'	5 <sup>th</sup> B, 5 <sup>th</sup> G	3 <sup>rd</sup> Irish ('78)
	'Flowers'	5 <sup>th</sup> B, 5 <sup>th</sup> G	
	'The Village Blacksmith'	5 <sup>th</sup> B	3 <sup>rd</sup> Irish ('78)
	'The Lighthouse'	5 <sup>th</sup> B	
	'Maidenhood'	5 <sup>th</sup> G	
Lowell, J.R.	'The Fountain'	5 <sup>th</sup> B, 5 <sup>th</sup> G	

POET	POEM	READER(S)	PRIOR ENTRY
Lyons, J.G.	'Triumphs of the English Language'	5 <sup>th</sup> B, 5 <sup>th</sup> G	
<b>Mackay, Charles</b>	'Tubal Cain' 'If fortune with a smiling face'	5 <sup>th</sup> B 4 <sup>th</sup>	
<b>Montgomery, James</b>	'Home' 'The Press'	5 <sup>th</sup> B, 5 <sup>th</sup> G 5 <sup>th</sup> B	
Morris, G.P.	'A Leap for Life'	3 <sup>rd</sup>	
Nairne, Carolina	'Would You be Young again?'	5 <sup>th</sup> B	
<u>Rogers, Samuel</u>	'From the Pleasures of Memory'	5 <sup>th</sup> B, 5 <sup>th</sup> G	
Schiller, J.C.F.	'Honour to Women' [translation]	5 <sup>th</sup> G	
<b>Scott, Walter</b>	'Lord Marmion and His Train' 'The Battle of Flodden' 'The Douglas'	4 <sup>th</sup> 4 <sup>th</sup> 5 <sup>th</sup> B	
<b>Shakespeare, W.</b>	'King Henry the Fifth' 'Fall of Wolsey' 'Farewell to Buckingham' 'Hotspur's Description of a Fop' 'Once more unto the breach'	5 <sup>th</sup> B, 5 <sup>th</sup> G 5 <sup>th</sup> B; 5 <sup>th</sup> B 5 <sup>th</sup> G 5 <sup>th</sup> G	
Shelley, P.B.	'The Cloud'	5 <sup>th</sup> B; 5 <sup>th</sup> G	
<b>Southey, Robert</b>	'The Battle of Blenheim'	3 <sup>rd</sup>	3 <sup>rd</sup> Irish ('45)
Swain, C.	'Little by Little'	2 <sup>nd</sup>	
<b>Thomson, James</b>	'Labours of the Field in Spring' 'The Castle of Indolence'	5 <sup>th</sup> G 5 <sup>th</sup> G	
Whittier, J.G.	'Barbara Fritchie'	5 <sup>th</sup> G	
<u>Willis, N.P.</u>	'David's Lament for Absalom'	5 <sup>th</sup> G	
Wilson, John	'A Sinking Ship'	5 <sup>th</sup> B, 5 <sup>th</sup> G	
<b>Wordsworth, W.</b>	'The Teachings of Nature' 'Dover on the Day of Landing' 'A Portrait' ('She was a phantom of delight') 'The Education of Nature' ('Three years she grew . . .') 'The Girl and the Drowning Lamb' (Part I of 'The Westmoreland Girl') 'Nature' (from 'Tintern Abbey') 'The Pet Lamb'	5 <sup>th</sup> B, 5 <sup>th</sup> G 5 <sup>th</sup> B, 5 <sup>th</sup> G 5 <sup>th</sup> G 5 <sup>th</sup> G 5 <sup>th</sup> G 5 <sup>th</sup> G 2 <sup>nd</sup>	3 <sup>rd</sup> Irish ('45, '51, '78)
<b>Young, Edward</b>	'Be wise today' 'All men think all men mortal'	4 <sup>th</sup> 4 <sup>th</sup>	5 <sup>th</sup> Irish ('49)

Entries in **bold type** indicate those poets and poems included in the sample of *Irish Readers*.

Entries underlined indicate poets included in the BFSS *Daily Lesson Books*.

The abbreviations 5B and 5G signify the fifth readers for boys and girls.



Poetry content in the *New Australian School Series*

READER	NO. OF POEMS	NO. OF PROSE LESSONS	% OF POETRY
Book 2	14	57	20
Book 3	18	75	19
Book 4	19	59	24
Book 5	38	65	37

Poets and poems included in the *New Australian School Series*

POET	POEM	READER	PRIOR ENTRY
Allingham, W.	'The Fairy Folk'	2 <sup>nd</sup>	
Arnold, Matthew	'The Forsaken Merman'	4 <sup>th</sup>	
The Bible	'The Sluggard' (Proverbs)	4 <sup>th</sup>	
Blake, William	'The Child and the Piper'	2 <sup>nd</sup>	
	'Night'	2 <sup>nd</sup>	
Browning, Robert	'The Pied Piper of Hamelin'	4 <sup>th</sup>	
	'Good News from Ghent to Aix'	4 <sup>th</sup>	
	'Herve Riel'	5 <sup>th</sup>	
Burns, Robert	'A Man's a Man for a' That'	5 <sup>th</sup>	
Byron, Lord	'Destruction of Sennacherib'	3 <sup>rd</sup>	
	'Venice' ( <i>Childe Harold</i> )	5 <sup>th</sup>	
	'The Colosseum' ( <i>CH</i> )	5 <sup>th</sup>	
Campbell, T.	'Ye Mariners of England'	4 <sup>th</sup>	3 <sup>rd</sup> Irish (1878)
	'Lord Ullin's Daughter'	3 <sup>rd</sup>	
Coleridge, S.T.	'Kubla Khan'	5 <sup>th</sup>	
	'The Ancient Mariner'	5 <sup>th</sup>	
Collins, William	'Ode – How sleep the brave'	5 <sup>th</sup>	
Cowper, William	'John Gilpin'	3 <sup>rd</sup>	
Dibdin, Charles	'The Perfect Sailor'	4 <sup>th</sup>	
Emerson, R. W.	'Mountain & the Squirrel'	2 <sup>nd</sup>	
Goldsmith, O.	'On Death of a Mad Dog'	3 <sup>rd</sup>	
Gordon, Adam L.	'The Sick Stockrider'	5 <sup>th</sup>	
Gray, Thomas	'In a Country Churchyard'	5 <sup>th</sup>	
Hemans, Felicia	'Tyrolese Evening Hymn'	3 <sup>rd</sup>	
Herbert, George	'Virtue'	5 <sup>th</sup>	
Herrick, Robert	'To Daffodils'	3 <sup>rd</sup>	
Holmes, Oliver W.	'The Chambered Nautilus'	5 <sup>th</sup>	
Hood, Thomas	'A Song'	3 <sup>rd</sup>	
	'I Remember, I Remember'	3 <sup>rd</sup>	
Hunt, Leigh	'Abou Ben Adhem'	4 <sup>th</sup>	
Jonson, Ben	'Cynthia's Revels'	5 <sup>th</sup>	
Keats, John	'Sonnet – Much have I travelled...'	5 <sup>th</sup>	
	'To Autumn'	5 <sup>th</sup>	
Kendall, Henry	'A Day of Dream'	5 <sup>th</sup>	
Kipling, Rudyard	'The English Flag'	5 <sup>th</sup>	
	'The Ballad of East and West'	5 <sup>th</sup>	
Langhorne, John	'To a Redbreast'	2 <sup>nd</sup>	2 <sup>nd</sup> Irish (1851)
Lawson, Henry	'The Ballad of the Drover'	4 <sup>th</sup>	
Longfellow, H.W.	'The Children's Hour'	3 <sup>rd</sup>	
	'50 <sup>th</sup> Birthday of Agassiz'	3 <sup>rd</sup>	
	'The Village Blacksmith'	3 <sup>rd</sup>	3 <sup>rd</sup> Irish (1878)
	'Wreck of the "Hesperus"'	3 <sup>rd</sup>	A.R. 5 (B)
	'A Psalm of Life'	4 <sup>th</sup>	A.R. 4
			3 <sup>rd</sup> Irish (1878)
			A.R. 5 (B)
Lovelace, Richard	'To Althea from Prison'	5 <sup>th</sup>	
	'To Lucasta on Going to the Wars'	5 <sup>th</sup>	
Lowell, James, R.	'Yussouf'	4 <sup>th</sup>	
Macauley, Thomas	'Horatius'	4 <sup>th</sup>	
	'The Armada'	5 <sup>th</sup>	
Mackay, Charles	'The Miller of Dee'	2 <sup>nd</sup>	
Mackay, Kenneth	'Song Men Should Sing'	4 <sup>th</sup>	

POET	POEM	READER	PRIOR ENTRY
<b>Milton, John</b>	'L' Allegro' <b>'On His Blindness'</b>	4 <sup>th</sup> 5 <sup>th</sup>	5 <sup>th</sup> Irish (1849)
<b>Moore, Thomas</b>	'The Minstrel Boy'	3 <sup>rd</sup>	
Nashe, Thomas	'Spring'	2 <sup>nd</sup>	
Paterson, A. B.	'Clancy of the Overflow'	5 <sup>th</sup>	
Peacock, Thomas	'The Priest and the Mulberry Tree'	3 <sup>rd</sup>	
Poe, Edgar A.	'The Haunted Palace'	5 <sup>th</sup>	
<b>Scott, Walter</b>	'Lullaby of an Infant Chief' 'Hunting Song' 'Soldier, Rest' <b>'Love of Country'</b>  'The Outlaw' 'Young Lochinvar' 'Saxon & the Gael' 'Douglas & Marmion'	2 <sup>nd</sup> 3 <sup>rd</sup> 3 <sup>rd</sup> 4 <sup>th</sup>  4 <sup>th</sup> 4 <sup>th</sup> 4 <sup>th</sup> 5 <sup>th</sup>	3 <sup>rd</sup> Irish (1845) 3 <sup>rd</sup> Irish (1878)
<b>Shakespeare, W.</b>	'A Happy Life' 'Arthur & Hubert' 'Once more unto the breach' <b>'Fall of Wolsley'</b> 'Seven Ages of Man' 'Antony's Address' 'This royal throne of kings' 'This England never did . . '	2 <sup>nd</sup> 4 <sup>th</sup> 5 <sup>th</sup> 5 <sup>th</sup> 5 <sup>th</sup> 5 <sup>th</sup> 5 <sup>th</sup> 5 <sup>th</sup>	A.R. 5 (B)
<b>Shelley, P.B.</b>	'On a Poet's lips I slept' <b>'The Cloud'</b>	5 <sup>th</sup> 5 <sup>th</sup>	A.R. 5 (B), (G)
Shirley, James	'Death's Final Conquest'	5 <sup>th</sup>	
Stevenson, R.L.	'Birthday Verses'	3 <sup>rd</sup>	
Taylor, Bayard	'A Storm Song'	2 <sup>nd</sup>	
Watson, William	'To the Colonies'	5 <sup>th</sup>	
Whitman, Walt	'Death of President Lincoln'	5 <sup>th</sup>	
<b>Whittier, J.G.</b>	<b>'Barbara Frietche'</b>	4 <sup>th</sup>	A. R. 5 (G)
<b>Wordsworth, W.</b>	'Lucy Gray' 'The Daffodils' 'Milton! Thou shouldst . . .' 'It is a beauteous evening' 'The world is too much with us'	2 <sup>nd</sup> 3 <sup>rd</sup> 5 <sup>th</sup> 5 <sup>th</sup> 5 <sup>th</sup>	

Entries in **bold type** indicate those poets and poems included in earlier school readers used in Tasmanian classrooms.

Poetry content in the *Royal Readers*

READER & EDITION	NO. OF POEMS	NO. OF PROSE LESSONS	% OF POETRY
No. I (1904)	22	62	35
No. II (1891)	34	78	30
No. III (1877)	21	80	21
No. IV (1904)	34	60	36
No. V (1885)	43	90	32
No. VI (1876)	32	118	27

Poets and poems in the *Royal Readers* not featured in earlier class readers

POET	POEM(S)	READER
Aikin, Lucy (1781-1864)	'The Beggar Man'	III
Akers, Mrs (? - ?)	'Rock me to Sleep'	V
Armstrong, John (1709-1779)	'On Early Rising'	II
Bateman, H. (? - ?)	'The Ship on Fire'	V
Bell, H.G. (1803-1874)	'Mary, Queen of Scots'	V
Cary, Alice (1820-1871)	'An Order for a Picture'	V
Croly, George (1780-1860)	'Retreat of the French Army from Moscow'	VI
Dale, Thomas (1797-1870)	'Regulus before the Roman Senate'	VI
Daniel, W.S. (? - ?)	'The Bonfire of Craig-Gowan'	IV
Elliott, Charlotte (1789-1871)	'Thy Will be Done'	V
Gurney, J.H. (1802-1862)	'Story of William Tell'	IV
Hastings, Flora (? - ?)	'The Legend of the Heart of Bruce'	IV
Howitt, William (1792-1879)	'The Wind in a Frolic'	IV
Hugo, Victor (1802-1885)	'The Poor Fisher Folk'	V
Lacoste, Mrs (? - ?)	'Somebody's Darling'	VI
Landon, Letitia (1802-1838)	'The Soldier's Grave'	VI
Littlewood, W.E. (1831-1886)	'Nature'	VI
McLellan, Frances (? -1837)	'The Death of Napoleon at St Helena'	VI
Milnes, Richard (1809-1885)	'Good Night and Good Morning'	II
Norton, Charles Eliot (1827-1908)	'Bingen on the Rhine'	VI
Payne, John Howard (1791-1852)	'Home, Sweet Home'	IV
Robinson, J.D. (? - ?)	'The Little Boy that Died'	V
Spencer, W.R. (1770-1769)	'Llewelyn and his Dog'	IV
Stodard, M.A. (? - ?)	'One Thing at a Time'	I
Taylor, Jane (1783-1824)	'The Donkey'	II
Tennyson, Alfred Lord (1809-1892)	'The May Queen'	IV
	'The Brook'	V
	'Lady Clare'	V
	'Ring out, Wild Bells'	V
	'Charge of the Light Brigade'	VI
Trench, Herbert (1865-1923)	'The Rule of God'	V
Webb, Benjamin (1819-1851)	'Jessie of Lucknow'	IV

Poets and poems in the *Royal Readers* represented in earlier class readers

POET	POEM	READER	PRIOR ENTRY
Addison, Joseph	'Creation'	V	3 <sup>rd</sup> Irish (1878)
Alford, Henry	'Harvest Hymn'	V	
Aytoun, William	'Edinburgh after Flodden'	VI	
Browning, Robert	'Herve Riel'	V	NAR 5
	'Good News-Ghent to Aix'	VI	NAR 4
Burns, Robert	'Family Worship'	VI	
Byron, Lord	'The Ocean'	V	AR 4; AR 5 (B) & (G)
	'Eve of Waterloo'	V	AR 5 (B)
	'Greece'	VI	AR 5 (B) & (G)
	'The Shipwreck'	V	AR 5 (B)
	'Destruction of Senna...'	V	NAR 3
	'Vision of Belshazzar'	V	
	'Thermopylae'	VI	
Campbell, Thomas	'The Soldier's Dream'	IV	3 <sup>rd</sup> Irish (1878)
	'Ye Mariners of England'	VI	3 <sup>rd</sup> Irish (1878); NAR 4
	'Battle of Hohenlinden'	IV	3 <sup>rd</sup> Irish (1878)
	'Lord Ullin's Daughter'	IV	NAR 3
	'Napoleon & English Sailor'	IV	
	'The Rainbow'	V	
	'Lochiel's Warning'	V	
	'The Battle of the Baltic'	V	
	'On the Downfall of Poland'	V	
Cibber, Colley	'The Blind Boy'	III	BFSS I & II; AR 2
Coleridge, S.T.	'Vale of Chamouni'	VI	AR 5 (B)
Cook, Eliza	'The Old Arm Chair'	IV	AR 5 (G)
	'Bruce and the Spider'	IV	
Cowper, William	'Boadicea'	IV	AR 3
	'John Gilpin'	IV	NAR 3
	'The Loss of Royal George'	IV	
Goldsmith, Oliver	'The Deserted Village'	V	
	'The Village Preacher'	V	
Gray, Thomas	'Elegy in Country Churchyard'	V	NAR 5
Hemans, Felicia	'Casabianca'	IV	AR 2
	'The Voice of Spring'	IV	
	'He Never Smiled Again'	IV	
	'The Spanish Champion'	V	
	'The Pilgrim Fathers'	V	
	'Roman Girl's Song'	VI	
Hogg, James	'The Sky-Lark'	V	
Holmes, O.W.	'Address to the Deity'	V	

POET	POEM	READER	PRIOR ENTRY
Hood, Thomas	<b>'The Song of the Shirt'</b>	VI	AR 5 (G)
Howitt, Mary	<b>'The Spider &amp; the Fly'</b> <b>'The Sea-Gull'</b> <b>'The Wood-mouse'</b>	III IV II	BFSS II; NAR 2
Hunt, Leigh	<b>'The Glove and the Lions'</b>	VI	
Logan, John	<b>'To the Cuckoo'</b>	IV	3 <sup>rd</sup> Irish (1845)
Longfellow, H.W.	<b>'A Psalm of Life'</b>  <b>'The Village Blacksmith'</b>  <b>'The Lighthouse'</b> <b>'Wreck of "Hesperus"'</b> <b>'The Slave's Dream'</b>	V  IV  VI IV V	3 <sup>rd</sup> Irish (1878); AR 5 (B) and (G); NAR 4 3 <sup>rd</sup> Irish (1878); AR 5 (B); NAR 3 AR 5 (B) AR 4; NAR 3
Lyons, J.G.	<b>'Triumphs of English Language'</b>	V	AR 5 (B) & (G)
Macaulay, Thomas	<b>'Story of Horatius'</b>	VI	NAR 4
Mackay, Charles	<b>'The Ship on Fire'</b> <b>'Today and Tomorrow'</b>	IV IV	AR 4
Montgomery, James	<b>'A Mother's Love'</b>	V	
Moore, Thomas	<b>'Miriam's Song'</b> <b>'The Turf . . . my Shrine'</b>	V V	
Opie, Amelia	<b>'The Orphan Boy'</b>	III	3 <sup>rd</sup> Irish 1845 & 1851
Poe, Edgar A.	<b>'The Bells'</b>	VI	
Rogers, Samuel	<b>'The Four Eras'</b> <b>'Venice'</b> <b>'Ginevra'</b>	V VI VI	
Scott, Walter	<b>'Love of Country'</b>  <b>'Young Lochinvar'</b> <b>'The Saxon and the Gael'</b> <b>'The Death of de Boune'</b> <b>'Parting of Marion &amp; Douglas'</b> <b>'The Lady of the Lake'</b>	IV  V V IV V VI	3 <sup>rd</sup> Irish 1845 & 1878; NAR 4 NAR 4 NAR 4
Shakespeare, W.	<b>'The Seven Ages of Man'</b> <b>'King John'</b> <b>'Once more unto the breach'</b> <b>'Midnight on the Battle-Field'</b> <b>'Soliloquy of Henry IV'</b>	VI VI VI VI VI	NAR 5 NAR 5; AR 5 (B) & (G); NAR 5
Shelley, P.B.	<b>'The Cloud'</b>	VI	AR 5 (B) & (G); NAR 5
Southey, Robert	<b>'The Inchcape Bell'</b> <b>'The Well of St Keyne'</b>	IV V	
Taylor, Ann	<b>'Meddlesome Matty'</b>	III	
Willis, N.P.	<b>'David's Lament for Absalom'</b>	V	AR 5 (G)
Wolfe, Charles	<b>'Burial of Sir John Moore'</b>	IV & VI	3 <sup>rd</sup> Irish 1878
Wordsworth, W.	<b>'Lucy Gray'</b> <b>'We are Seven'</b> <b>'Fidelity'</b> <b>'Grace Darling'</b>	III III IV V	NAR 2

Names of poets and titles of poems in **bold type** are those that appeared in other readers in the sample examined in this study.

BFSS = British and Foreign School Society *Daily Lesson Books*; NAR = *New Australian Series*; AR = *Australian Readers*; AR 5 (B) and (AR 5(G) = *Fifth Australian Reader* for boys and girls respectively.

Poets represented in a sample of class readers prescribed for Tasmanian elementary schools 1841 - 1900

POET	<i>BFSS</i>	<i>IRISH</i>	<i>AUST.</i>	<i>NEW AUST.</i>	<i>ROYAL</i>
Abbott (? - ?)	3				
Addison, Joseph (1672 – 1719)		3			5
Aikin, Lucy (1781 – 1864)					3
Akenside, Mark (1721-1770)		5	5B&G		
Akers, Mrs (? - ?)					5
Alford, Henry (1810 – 1871)			5B&G		5
Allingham, William (1824 – 1889)				2	
Armstrong, John (1709 – 1779)					2
Arnold, Matthew (1822 – 1888)				4	
Aytoun, William (1813 – 1865)			5B		6
Balfour, Mary (1775 – 1820)		3			
Barbauld, Anna (1743 – 1824)		3			
Barton, Bernard (1784 – 1849)		3			
Bateman, H. (? - ?)					5
Beattie, James (1735 – 1803)		3, 5			
Bell, Henry (1803 – 1874)					5
Blake, William (1757 – 1827)				2	
Bowles, William (1762 – 1850)	3				
Brainerd, David (1718 – 1747)	3				
Browning, Elizabeth (1806 – 1861)			5G		
Browning, Robert (1812 – 1889)				4	5, 6
Bruce, James (1730 – 1794)			5B&G		
Bryant, William (1794 – 1878)	3	5			
Burns, Robert (1759 – 1796)			5G	5	6
Byrom, John (1692- 1763)		2S			
Byron, George (1788 – 1824)			4, 5B&G	3, 5	5, 6
Campbell, Thomas (1777 – 1844)		3, 5	5B&G	3, 4	4, 5, 6
Carter, Elizabeth (1717 – 1806)		3			
Cary, Alice (1820 – 1871)					5
Caswell, Edward (1814 – 1878)		3			
Cibber, Colley (1671 – 1757)	1, 2		2		3
Coleridge, Samuel (1772 – 1834)	3		5B&G	5	6
Collins, William (1721 – 1759)				5	
Cook, Eliza (1818 – 1889)			5B&G		4
Cornwall, Barry (1787 – 1874)	3	3			
Cottle, Joseph (1770 – 1853)	3				
Cowper, William (1731 – 1800)	3	3, 4, 5	3, 5G	3, 4, 5	4
Crabbe, George (1754 – 1832)	3				
Croly, George (1780 – 1860)					6
Cunningham, John (1729 – 1773)		3			
Cutter, G.W. (? - ?)			3, 4, 5B		
Dale, Thomas (1797 – 1870)					6
Dana, Richard (1815 – 1882)	3				
Daniel, Samuel (1563 – 1619)			5B		
Daniel, W.S. (? - ?)					4
Dibdin, Charles (1745 – 1814)				4	
Doane, George (1799 – 1859)	3				
Dufferin, Helen (1807 – 1867)		3			
Edmeston, James (1791 – 1867)	3	3			



POET	BFSS	IRISH	AUST.	NEW AUST.	ROYAL
Elliott, Charlotte (1789 – 1871)					5
Emerson, R.W. (1803 – 1882)				2	
Gay, John (1685 – 1732)		3			
Garrison, W.G. (? - ?)	3				
Gisborne, Thomas (1758 – 1846) ?	3				
Goldsmith, Oliver (1730 – 1774)		4	4, 5G	3	5
Gordon, A.L. (1833 – 1870)				5	
Gould, Hannah (1789 – 1865)	3	5			
Grahame, James (1765 – 1811)		4			
Gray, James (1770 – 1830)		3			
Gray, Thomas (1716 – 1771)			5B&G	5	5
Gurney, J.H. (1802 – 1862)					4
Hastings, Flora (? - ?)					4
Heber, Reginald (1773 – 1826)	3	3, 4			
Hemans, Felicia (1793 – 1835)	3	3	5B&G	2, 3	4, 5, 6
Herbert, George (1593 – 1633)				5	
Herrick, Robert (1591 – 1674)			5B	3	
Hervey, Thomas (1799 – 1859)		5			
Hickson, William (1803 – 1870)		2S			
Hogg, James (1792 – 1862)		4			5
Holmes, Oliver (1809 – 1894)				5	5
Hood, Thomas (1799 – 1845)			5G	3	6
Howitt, Mary (1799 – 1888)	2	2S, 3	2	2	3, 4
Howitt, William (1792 – 1879)					4
Hugo, Victor (1802 – 1885)					5
Hunt, Leigh (1784 – 1859)			5B&G	4	6
Hurdis, James (1763 – 1801)		4			
Johnson, Samuel (1709 – 1784)	3				
Jonson, Ben (1572 – 1637)				5	
Keats, John (1795 – 1821)				5	
Kendall, Henry (1839 – 1882)			3	5	
Kipling, Rudyard (1865 – 1936)				5	
Knox, Vicesimus (1752 – 1821)	3				
Knowles, J.S. (1784 – 1862)			5B		
Lacoste, Mrs (? - ?)					6
Landon, Letitia (1802 – 1838)					6
Langhorne, John (1735 – 1779)	2	2		2	
Lawson, Henry (1867 – 1922)				4	
Lee, F.G. (? - ?)			5G		
Littlewood, W.E. (1831 – 1886)					6
Logan, John (1748 – 1788)		3			4
Longfellow, H. W. (1807 – 1882)		3	4, 5B&G	3, 4	4, 5, 6
Lovelace, Richard (1618 – 1658)				5	
Lowell, James (1819 – 1891)			5B&G	4	
Lyons, J.G. (? - ?)			5B&G		5
Macaulay, Thomas (1800 – 1859)				4, 5	6
Mackay, Charles (1814 – 1889)		3	4, 5B	2	4
Mackay, Kenneth (1850 – 1935)				4	
Marsden, John (1803 – 1891)		4			
MacLellan, Frances (? – 1837)					6
Merrick, James (1720 – 1760)		3			
Milnes, Richard (1809 – 1885)					2
Milton, John (1608 – 1674)	3	4, 5		4, 5	
Montgomery, James (1771 – 1854)	3	3, 4	5B&G		5
Montrose, James (1612 – 1650)		3			
Moodie, Susanna (1803 – 1885)	3				

POET	BFSS	IRISH	AUST.	NEW AUST.	ROYAL
Moore, Thomas (1779 – 1852)	3	3		3	5
Morris, G.P. (? - ?)			3		
Nairn, Carolina (1766 – 1845)			5B		
Nashe, Thomas (1567 – 1601)				2	
Neele, Henry (1798 – 1828)		5			
Newton, John (1725 – 1807)		3			
Norton, Charles (1827 – 1908)					6
Opie, Amelia (1769 – 1853)	3				3
Paterson, A.B. (1864 – 1941)				5	
Payne, John (1791 – 1852)					4
Peacock, Thomas (1785 – 1866)				3	
Poe, Edgar (1809 – 1849)				5	6
Pollock, Robert (1799 – 1827)		5			
Robinson, J.D. (? - ?)					5
Rogers, Samuel (1763 – 1855)	3		5B&G		5, 6
Schiller, Johann (1759 – 1805)			5G		
Scott, Walter (1771 – 1832)		3, 5	4, 5B	2, 3, 4, 5	4, 5, 6
Shakespeare, W. (1564 – 1616)	3	5	4, 5B&G	2, 4, 5	6
Shelley, P.B. (1792 – 1822)			5B&G	5	6
Shirley, James (1596 – 1666)				5	
Sigourney, Lydia (1791 – 1865)	3	5			
Smith, Charlotte (1749 – 1843)	3				
Southey, Robert (1774 – 1843)	3	3	3		4, 5
Spencer, W.R. (1770 – 1834)					4
Stevenson, R.L. (1850 – 1894)				3	
Stodard, M.A. (? - ?)					1
Strickland, Agnes (1796 – 1874)	3				
Swain, Charles (1803 - ?)			2		
Taylor, Ann (1782 – 1866)	2	2			2
Taylor, Bayard (1825 – 1878)				2	
Taylor, Jane (1783-1824)					2
Tennyson, Alfred (1809 – 1892)					4, 5, 6
Thomson, James (1700 – 1748)	3	5	5G		
Trench, Herbert (1865 – 1923)					5
Watson, William (1858 – 1935)				5	
Watts, Isaac (1674 – 1748)	2	2, 3			
Webb, Benjamin (1819 – 1851)					4
Whitman, Walt (1812 – 1892)				5	
Whittier, J.G. (1807 – 1892)				4	
Wilcox, Thomas (1549 – 1608)	3	5			
Wilkie, William (1721 – 1772)		3			
Willis, Nathaniel (1806 – 1867)	3		5G		5
Wilson, John (1785 – 1854)			5B&G		
Wolfe, Charles (1791 – 1823)	3				4, 6
Wordsworth, W. (1770 – 1850)	3	2S, 3	2, 5B&G	2, 3, 5	3, 4, 5
Young, Edward (1681 – 1765)		4, 5	4		

Numbers indicate the grade of reader in which the poet appears.

2S = Sequel to the Second *Irish Reader*. 5B and 5G = *Fifth Australian Reader for Boys*, and *Fifth Australian Reader for Girls*.

Number of poems by poets represented in the sample of readers prescribed for  
Tasmanian elementary schools 1841-1900

POET	NO. OF POEMS	NO. OF READERS	INDIVIDUAL POEMS FEATURING IN THREE OR MORE READERS
Cowper, William	36	5	'Verses Written by Alexander Selkirk'
Shakespeare, W.	21	5	'Once more unto the breach'
Wordsworth, W.	19	5	'The Pet Lamb' (4)
Scott, Walter	17	4	'Love of Country'
Campbell, Thomas	16	4	'The Harper and his Dog' 'Ye Mariners of England'
Moore, Thomas	15	4	'Hebrew Melody'
Montgomery, J.	13	4	
Hemans, Felicia	12	5	'Birds of Passage'
Longfellow, H.W.	11	4	'Psalm of Life' (5) 'The Village Blacksmith' (4) 'Sand of the Desert in an Hour-Glass' 'The Wreck of the Hesperus'
Byron, George	11	3	'The Ocean' (4) 'Greece'
Goldsmith, O.	7	4	
Milton, John	6	3	
Howitt, Mary	5	5	'The Spider and the Fly'
Mackay, Charles	5	4	
Coleridge, S.T.	5	4	
Southey, Robert	5	4	
Rogers, Samuel	5	3	
Thompson, James	5	3	
Willis, Nathaniel	5	3	
Hunt, Leigh	4	3	
Burns, Robert	3	3	
Gray, Thomas	3	3	
Hood, Thomas	3	3	
Taylor, Ann	2	3	
Langhorne, John	2	3	'To a Redbreast'
Shelley, P.B.	2	3	'The Cloud' (4)*
Cibber, Colley	1	3	'The Blind Boy' (4)**

Numbers in parenthesis in the fourth column indicate those poems that featured in four or five readers. Shelley's 'The Cloud' and Longfellow's 'Psalm of Life' were included in both the boys' and girls' editions of the *Fifth Australian Reader*. Cibber's 'The Blind Boy' was included in BFSS *Daily Lesson Books I and II*.

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## Notes

<sup>1</sup> John Barrett describes these events in chapter 8 of his *That Better Country*.

<sup>2</sup> Sprod discusses in detail the purpose of education in the colony and the nature of the population to which it was directed.

<sup>3</sup> The Bonwicks moved to the mainland in the late 1840s where James published further geography texts, his *Grammar for Australian Youth* (1851) and *Reader for Australian Youth Part I* (1852). This *Reader* was designed to 'meet the requirements of Australian schools and families', and contained 'extracts from approved authors, selections from the writings of Australian explorers and naturalists and original articles upon Familiar Science, as well as Australian history and discovery' ('Preface'). It contained over seventy readings, at least twenty of which related to Australia, including one about Hobart's Mount Wellington. Compared with the BFSS *Daily Lesson Books*, Bonwick's *Reader* gave greater priority to prose than to poetry. The ten poems in the *Reader* included works by Felicia Hemans, Jane Taylor, Eliza Cook and Mary Howitt. See Prescott 16, 33-5; and Bonwick's *An Octogenarian's Reminiscences* 95-103.

<sup>4</sup> Schools operating under the auspices of the Church of England did not adhere to this curriculum. Barrett describes the variety of materials and methods adopted in these schools (115-36).

<sup>5</sup> Lancaster's chapter 'On the Religious Instruction of Youth' described methods to ensure children's comprehension of reading material (146-64).

<sup>6</sup> See letters to Rev. Grigg (4 November 1847), Rev. Brown (22 January 1848) and to Mr Hutchinson (4 April 1848) advising that readers had been forwarded to their schools. See letters to Government Printer of 13 March, 27 April, 26 May, 28 September and 3 November 1848 seeking reprints of readers and lesson sheets for distribution to schools. 'Letterbook of Outward Letters of the Secretary 6 September 1847-7 July 1851'.

<sup>7</sup> The catalogue entry for *Daily Lesson Book IV* describes its contents as follows: 'This Volume includes a brief outline of English History; – a Course of General History, Ancient and Modern; a complete Series of Lessons on the various branches of Natural Philosophy; – a Systematic Course of Natural History; – Miscellaneous Lessons on Government, Architecture, Commerce, Painting and Sculpture, Music and the Arts; – and an extended Series of Geographical, Chronological, and Scientific Notes and Questions'. BFSS *Annual Report* 1850: Appendix, n.p.

<sup>8</sup> Goldstrom identifies these 'major church organisations' as the National Society, the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, the British and Foreign School Society, the Catholic Poor School Committee, the Congregational Board of Education and the Wesleyan Education Committee (5).

<sup>9</sup> The term 'improving verse' is more properly applied to anthologies of moral and sentimental poetry published for children in the late 18<sup>th</sup> century. See Benedict 198.

<sup>10</sup> Shortage of copies of texts and the use of display and wall charts also made such methods necessary. See Goldstrom 36.

<sup>11</sup> The Quakers Backhouse and Walker distributed many 'pamphlets and textbooks produced by the B. & F. S. S.' during their visit to Australia in the 1830s (Oats 11). It is reasonable to assume that they also distributed Quaker texts by Murray and other writers, and that these texts were available in Tasmania at that time.

<sup>12</sup> Henry Dunn and John Thomas Crossley were joint editors of the *Daily Lesson Books*.

<sup>13</sup> Despite the availability of the Society's *Daily Lesson Books*, these lesson sheets were still being used in the colony's schools as late as 1848. The Board of Education's Secretary wrote to the Colonial Secretary on 28<sup>th</sup> September of that year requesting authority to procure from the Government Printer

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'the whole series of the Reading Sheets published by the British and Foreign School Society' ('Letterbook').

<sup>14</sup> These writers featured in Lindley Murray's *Introduction to the English Reader* and *Sequel to the English Reader*. Murray's readers were designed to 'imbue' children's minds with 'the love of virtue'. The readers contained passages of prose and verse grouped according to whether they were narrative, descriptive, didactic, 'pathetic' or 'promiscuous'. Charles Monaghan provides further details about these publications and the life of Lindley Murray.

<sup>15</sup> *Introduction to the English Reader*, 189, 201, 210, 211, 228. The titles of the poems are capitalised as they are printed in the reader. Quotations from Watts's poems are drawn from this source. My correspondence with the BFSS Archivist in England in 2003 confirmed that copies of the BFSS lesson sheets, in which these and similar poems appeared, are no longer available.

<sup>16</sup> 'sovereign power' and 'gaze' are Foucault's words, quoted by Jay (182). Foucault's concepts of discipline and power are particularly relevant to schooling in Victorian times.

<sup>17</sup> Children were often warned of the 'snares' of life. Anna Barbauld's poem 'The dangers and snares of life' (*Introduction to the English Reader* 229) was included in contemporary children's anthologies and classroom readers.

<sup>18</sup> The quotations in this paragraph come from the poems 'The excellence of the Bible' (211), 'Peace and love recommended' (190), 'The sluggard' (200), 'On industry' (212), 'The rose' (216), 'The ant' (217), 'Love to enemies' (228) and 'An evening hymn' (219), printed in Murray's *Introduction to the English Reader*.

<sup>19</sup> Cibber's poem is from *Daily Lesson Book I* (38) and was repeated in *Daily Lesson Book II* (29). Poems by Howitt (96), Langhorne (13) and Taylor (37) are from the second *Daily Lesson Book*.

<sup>20</sup> It is difficult to establish the precise year of publication for this text. Bartle notes evidence that suggests the book could have been available in some British schools in 1840 (27).

<sup>21</sup> For the purpose of this calculation, only prose extracts of more than one hundred words in the Saturday lessons are counted as separate prose readings.

<sup>22</sup> Two poems by Cowper, both titled 'Commerce', are extracts from one of his long poems. Similarly, two extracts by Montgomery, both titled 'Night', and two by Thomson, both titled 'Health', are extracts from their longer poems. 'Commerce', 'Night' and 'Health' are each counted as one poem in Table I.

<sup>23</sup> Tsurumi notes that Sarah Trimmer's *History of the Robins* (1786) was one of the best-known books addressed to children that emphasised kindness to animals (8). In her preface to the book (originally titled *Fabulous Histories*), Trimmer wrote that her stories about the robin redbreasts illustrated 'the sentiments and affections of a good father and mother and a family of children', and also served to 'excite compassion and tenderness for those interesting and delightful creatures on which such wanton cruelties are frequently inflicted' (vii-viii).

<sup>24</sup> The details of these disputes are not germane to this study. M.D. McRae, John Barrett and P.A. Howell examine these events in some detail.

<sup>25</sup> The third reader in the series was initially titled *Third Book of Lessons*. The revised edition of 1878 was titled *Third Reading Book*. These books will be referred to as readers and *Irish Readers* in this chapter.

<sup>26</sup> According to Hilary Minns, the Reverend James Carlile, one of the Irish Commissioners, had overall responsibility for producing the school books, and his brother-in-law, Alexander McArthur, compiled the five main readers in the series (3).

<sup>27</sup> The *Irish Readers* were also used for the education of prisoners and convicts. Some copies held in the Tasmaniana Library, State Library of Tasmania, are marked 'for the use of prisoners in school work', 'Prisoners Barracks, Hobart 1850', and 'Impression Bay Library 11/1106'.

<sup>28</sup> The sample of readers comprises The *Second Reader* (published 1850), the *Sequel to the Second Reader* (1851), the *Third Reader* (1845), the *Fourth Reader* (1849), the *Fifth Reader* (1849), and two further editions of the *Third Reader* published in 1851 and 1878. This sample has been chosen because copies of the actual texts used in Van Diemen's Land schools are held in the Tasmaniana collection at the State Library of Tasmania.

<sup>29</sup> Some of these most likely derived from John Aikin and Anna Barbauld's *Evenings at Home; or, The Juvenile Budget Opened*, published in 6 volumes (1792-6). Quayle describes this as 'a companionable and homely collection' of stories, poems and dialogues designed as entertainment for children (31).

<sup>30</sup> Minns analyses the natural history lessons in these Readers (8).

<sup>31</sup> 'Harry' in this poem could be named after the plain and virtuous Harry Sandford in Day's novel *The History of Sandford and Merton* where Harry's application to work, honesty and obliging nature are compared favourably with Tommy Merton's self-indulgence, pride and impatience.

<sup>32</sup> The editor was Inspector Gilchrist who was on leave in Britain at the time. See Musgrave 3.

<sup>33</sup> Firth notes the prevalence of Irish poetry in the *Approved Readers for the Catholic Schools of Australasia* (150). The significant number of Irish poems in the 1878 edition of the *Third Irish Reader*, designed for Australian schools, may well have been included in recognition of the numbers of Irish settlers and descendants in the Australian community.

<sup>34</sup> J.W. Beattie records verses written by a convict at Port Arthur that express similar feelings of exile. The writer was 'an unfortunate, long since passed away, who had unhappily experienced, and who could feel, the anguish' of exile. Before obtaining his freedom, the writer 'occupied a position on the scholastic staff of the Point Puer establishment'. His poem 'The Captive Exile' begins:

In every path of life, keen woes  
In dense array awaiting stand;  
But who the depth of suffering knows,  
Till banished from his native land.

Several stanzas of 'My Native Land' express the writer's sorrow at his separation from his wife and son, for example:

Yes, she for whom my bosom burns  
With unextinguished flame.  
And he—my gentle boy—is there,  
Who breathes but love for me,  
E'en 'midst the fate that bears me far,  
My Native Land, from thee! (51-2)

<sup>35</sup> The preface to the *Australian Readers* includes this statement: 'The superintendence of the series, while going through the press, has been under the care of THOMAS MORRISON, M.A., Rector of the Free Church Normal College, Glasgow' (*Fifth Reader for Girls* iv).

<sup>36</sup> This omission was an exception; other material in the readers contained such references. Parliament had appointed this Royal Commission to examine the quality of Tasmanian Education (Phillips 59).

<sup>37</sup> Lesson 134 of the *Fifth Reading Book for Boys* contains two poems. These are counted as separate entities in the number of poems listed for this reader in Table 6.

<sup>38</sup> Mary Howitt's poem 'The Fly and the Spider' was included in the BFSS *Daily Lesson Book II*.

<sup>39</sup> Unless the poet is acknowledged, all the poems from the *Second Reader* discussed in this paragraph are anonymous or unattributed.

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<sup>40</sup> 'The Song of Steam' in the *Third Reader* is a shorter version of that poem included in the *Fourth* and *Fifth Readers*.

<sup>41</sup> As the editor of the reader points out, Gray left this poem unfinished and the poet Mason added to the poem (B 20).

<sup>42</sup> There is some doubt about the year of publication for the *New Australian School Series* of readers. Firth states that 'they seem to have been published about 1899' (149). The National Library of Australia catalogue provides various dates for their publication, for example: First Reader (1903?), Third Reader (1901?), Fourth Reader (191?) and (1916?). It is likely that the readers were reprinted at various times early in the twentieth century.

<sup>43</sup> Irvine was born in Scotland and was educated in New Zealand before migrating to Australia at the age of thirty. He was a headmaster in New South Wales, examiner with the Public Service Board and lecturer in economics at the University of Sydney. He was an acquaintance of Christopher Brennan, Thea Proctor and the artist George Lambert. Irvine had planned to publish the *Australian Magazine* in 1897, and edited *Brooks's Australian Xmas Annual* in 1898. Contributors to this included Brennan, Lawson, Paterson and Daley. Irvine wrote several books including *Bubbles: His Book*. David Souter, also Scottish born, was a book-illustrator and cartoonist for the *Bulletin* (Morris Miller 250, 437).

<sup>44</sup> It is difficult to establish the extent of the use of *The New Australian Series* in Tasmanian classrooms. Only two copies of the readers are held in Tasmanian library collections. The copy of the *Second Reader*, held in the William Crowther collection, is inscribed with the name of student 'Wallace Leitch'. The copy of the *Fifth Reader*, in the Launceston State Library was once the property of Reginald T. Alcock, a pupil at Deloraine Primary School.

<sup>45</sup> Price writes that Thomas Nelson and Sons published 'series after series of [Royal Readers] in the last quarter of the nineteenth century' (1). Different editions of these readers were used in Tasmanian schools during these years, for example *Royal Reader No I* (published in 1904), *Royal Reader II* (published in 1891 and the revised edition of 1902), *Royal Reader III* (published in 1877), *Royal Reader IV* (published in 1895 and the revised edition of 1904), *Royal Reader V* (published in 1885 and the revised edition of 1895), *Royal Reader VI* (published in 1876 and the revised edition of 1892). The analysis of the readers conducted in this study is based on the following editions: *RR I* (1904); *RR II* (1891); *RR III* (1877); *RR IV* (1904); *RR V* (1885); *RR VI* (1876).

<sup>46</sup> Included in this number are two poems from the second reader, 'Welcome Little Robin' by 'J.D.B' and 'The Two Crossing-sweepers' by 'R.P.S.'

<sup>47</sup> Four of these poets are known today as children's writers or for their religious verse. Examples of Lucy Aikin and William Howitt's poems are included in *The Oxford Book of Children's Verse* (Opie, 1973). Charlotte Elliott and John Gurney's hymns are found in some contemporary hymnals including *The Australian Hymn Book* (1977).

<sup>48</sup> Sivier and Farrell discuss elocution and recitation practices of the time in their contributions to David Thompson's *Performance of Literature in Historical Perspectives* (1983).

<sup>49</sup> Palgrave also omitted Felicia Hemans and Leigh Hunt. Quiller-Couch included Hemans and Hunt, but omitted Cibber.

<sup>50</sup> Other poets in Scott's list who are represented in the sample of class readers include John Milton, Isaac Watts, George Herbert and Ann Taylor.

<sup>51</sup> This text was published 'by direction of the Commissioners of National Education in Ireland'. The third edition of the work was published in 1850.

<sup>52</sup> See Phillips for a copy of the complete 1865 Tasmanian 'Programme of Organisation and Instruction for Public Schools' (41).

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<sup>53</sup> Included among these additional subjects in the higher grades were Sacred History, the History of England, Object Lessons (industrial arts, elementary Science) Needlework (for girls) and Drill.

<sup>54</sup> In his Annual Report for 1898, Lovell claimed that the 'sing-song way of reading poetry' was 'quite a thing of the past in our schools' (*JPP* 41, 1899, Paper 13: 13).

<sup>55</sup> The precise percentages as recorded by Akenson are 'I Book 41.80; II Book 26.97; II Book Sequels 10.40; III Book 13.91; IV and higher Books 6.92' (233). These percentages cannot be used for accurate comparison with those relating to Tasmania. No evidence is available to indicate what constituted 'proficiency' for the Commissioners; for that matter there is no evidence that Tasmanian inspectors used comparable methods of assessing Tasmanian students as having reached a satisfactory standard in each grade. Tasmanian Inspectors did not assess children's performance using the *Sequel to the Second Reader*.

<sup>56</sup> Cowper's 'Boadicea' is from the *Third Australian Reader*. The stanza beginning 'The flying Mede' is from Byron's 'The Plains of Marathon', and the speech is from Shakespeare's *Henry VIII*. Both these passages are from the *Fifth Australian Reader*.



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## **2: POETRY AND POST-PRIMARY EDUCATION 1850 - 1900**

When Thomas Arnold arrived in Van Diemen's Land in 1850, the only secondary schools available for students were the Hutchins and Launceston Grammar Schools, both founded in 1845, and the High School at Hobart, founded in 1850. The Anglican Church operated the Hutchins and Launceston Grammar schools. The High School was a non-sectarian private school controlled by a board of management chosen by shareholders (Fenton 192). In 1850, planning was also being finalised for the opening of Horton College at Ross, sponsored by the Wesleyans (Pretymann 186). These were not government-controlled schools and Arnold was not responsible for their supervision. Governor Franklin's plans in the late 1830s and early 40s to introduce public 'superior' (secondary) and tertiary education to the colony had not been realised (Robson I, 339-43).<sup>1</sup> At the time of Arnold's appointment as Inspector of Schools, therefore, the Government exercised no direct control over secondary teaching, nor the examination and certification of students. Children's access to secondary schooling depended on parents' financial circumstances and their commitment to education. Access to university education was denied to all who could not afford 'to travel to the Old Country for this purpose' (Butler 22).

Leading citizens, such as Maxwell Miller, worked to improve access to secondary and tertiary education by suggesting the provision of scholarships for secondary education and promoting the need for a university within the colony. Miller established the *Tasmanian Daily News* in 1855 and featured both these causes in his editorials, expressing concern about intellectual talent being 'allowed to languish in obscurity' because there was 'no opening for its development' (Pirkis 50). One of Miller's recommendations to address this problem was the introduction of a Government scholarship scheme for primary schools to support selected children's secondary education at existing 'superior' schools (Pirkis 51); another was the establishment of a 'Council of the University of Hobart' to act as an examining body for the award of degrees in 'Arts, Law, or Physic' (French, 'Prehistory' 190). At the same time, Dr W. Crooke, a member of the Legislative Council, asked the Council for a large annual grant to inaugurate a full-scale teaching university (Davis 6). Following considerable public discussion, specific proposals and counter-proposals, and the unsuccessful introduction of two Bills in parliament, a Select Committee presented to parliament the 'Tasmanian Council of Education and

Scholarships Bill'.<sup>2</sup> This, with minor amendments, 'passed into law as Act 27 Vict. 21 on 5 November 1858' (French, 'Tasmanian Council' 133).

French has outlined the responsibilities of the Tasmanian Council of Education as described in the Act ('Tasmanian Council' 135-8). These responsibilities ensured that this Council controlled 'the entire sphere of higher education in the colony until the Council of the University of Tasmania was formed on 1 January 1890' (134). Its principal duty was to coordinate the conduct of three annual examinations. The most prestigious of these was the Tasmanian Scholarship examination to select two students each year who were considered suitable for admission to British universities, particularly Oxford or Cambridge. The Council also conducted examinations for the degree of Associate of Arts, an award marking students' successful completion of full secondary education, and eventually recognised as equivalent to Melbourne University's Matriculation (141).<sup>3</sup> The Council conducted examinations for 'the awarding of Exhibitions to Superior Schools', the winners of which were provided free post-primary schooling at one of the private superior schools (137). The Council co-ordinated the operation of these three examinations, appointed examiners to set and mark the papers, and reported the results to Parliament and the public. The examiners, particularly for the Scholarship and Associate of Arts qualifications, were often from interstate and included M.N. Irving, Professor of Classics and English at Melbourne University, Charles Badham, Professor of Classics at Sydney University, and Dr Bromby, Headmaster of Melbourne Church Grammar School. Local experts, such as Doctors Henry Hunter and Robert Officer, the Reverend F.H. Cox and Mr F.H. Henslowe, also acted as examiners (138).

The Council of Education published examination requirements for the three examinations, including the subjects to be examined and, in some instances, the texts to be studied. English featured in each of the examinations. English was a requirement for the Tasmanian Scholarship examination, together with either French or German, under the heading 'Modern Languages'. For the Associate of Arts degree, English was listed as 'English Language' within a group including History and Geography; and, as 'English Grammar', it was an essential element of the Exhibition examinations. Poetry was tested to a limited extent in each of these



examinations, but less so in those for the Exhibitions. As no formal syllabuses of study for secondary schools were developed or published within the State during this period, the Council's examination requirements, the examination papers and the examiners' comments form the main sources of information about the teaching of poetry in post-primary years until the University of Tasmania was founded in 1890.

### **Exhibition Examinations**

The Council of Education's annual reports provide details about the Exhibition examinations to award scholarships to students for free secondary schooling.

Candidates were examined in at least eight subjects over a period of three or four days. The range of subjects examined changed during the period, as did the nature of the examination in specific subject areas. English Grammar was examined each year, usually accompanied by dictation and oral reading tests. The Council's 1861 Annual Report lists the 9 subjects examined as English Grammar, Geography, Arithmetic, Latin, Greek, History, French, Algebra, and Euclid. The maximum marks for all subjects combined was 1200, of which English Grammar comprised 200 (*LCJ* 6, 1861, Paper 12: 5). Maximum marks for English Grammar were reduced to 150 in 1870 and those for Euclid increased accordingly (*LCJ* 16, 1870, Paper 14: 1). Changes in 1872 meant that candidates were examined in 8 subjects: Reading (50 marks), Dictation (100), Penmanship (50), English Grammar (200), Geography (200), History (200), Arithmetic (250) and Algebra and Euclid (150). In the 1880s, both the Council of Education and the Board of Education (responsible for the management and supervision of State-controlled schools) conducted separate examinations for Exhibition scholarships. The subjects examined by the two bodies differed in some respects. In 1886, for example, the Council's Exhibition examination covered English, French, Latin, Greek or German, Arithmetic, Algebra, Euclid, Geography and History, with English being accorded 12% of the total marks of 1,250 (*J&PP* 9, 1886, Paper 108: 5). The Board's examination covered 7 subjects: Reading, Dictation, Penmanship, Grammar, Geography, History and Arithmetic, with grammar accorded 21% and Reading and Dictation 15% of the total marks of 1,200 (*J&PP* 9, 1886, Paper 109: 5). A preliminary examination was introduced in the early 1870s to identify 'a smaller number of better prepared candidates' for the final examination (*LCJ* 19, 1873, Paper 15: 3).

The majority of questions in all the English Exhibition examination papers tested candidates' grammatical knowledge, English usage and elementary philology. Poetry featured in many of the examinations, either as an exercise in oral reading or as text for parsing and analysis, but was not examined as a literary form. On rare occasions, candidates were expected to respond to the meaning of words or phrases from quoted poems, name the writers of specific poems, and display some understanding of the function of rhyme.

Poetry reading was a means of testing aspects of speech and elocution in the English examinations. One examiner, the Rev. F. Hudspeth, made special mention of candidates' oral reading skills in his annual reports, and his comments reflected those made by school inspectors during their school visits. His 1872 report noted that three boys 'deserved full marks' for oral reading and that the rest of the candidates, 'with very few exceptions, read passages in prose and poetry with intelligence and care' (*LCJ* 18, 1872, Paper 33: 2). In the following year, he reported that in most cases the reading of prose 'was well delivered', but in poetry, 'with a few exceptions, there appeared a defective appreciation of rhythm and vocal inflexion'. Despite this criticism, 12 of the 13 candidates gained over 80% for reading (*LCJ* 19, 1873, Paper 42: 3).

The most common form of poetry question was to expect candidates to either 'parse' or 'analyse' stanzas, or find within them examples of the parts of speech. Extracts from poems such as Thomas Campbell's 'Ye Mariners of England' and Oliver Goldsmith's *The Deserted Village* were used for these purposes (*LCJ* 9, 1865, Paper 12: 7; and *LCJ* 30, 1881, Paper 30: 9). Question 7 on the 1868 English Grammar and Language examination paper was more demanding, using lines from Shakespeare's *Henry IV* to test a range of skills and knowledge:

Point out the Latin derivatives, and explain the words in *italics* in the following passage, parsing the last line:-

"Canst thou, O partial sleep! give thy repose  
To the wet sea-boy in an hour so rude;  
And, in the calmest and *most stillest* night,  
With all appliances and means *to boot*,  
Deny it to a king? Then happy *low lie down!*  
Uneasy lies the head that wears a crown!"

Who was the author of these lines, and who the supposed speaker? What do you understand by “poetical license?” Give an instance in the above. (*LCJ* 14, 1868, Paper 34: 8)

The few questions that expected candidates to demonstrate a knowledge of particular poems and their writers included one which provided the first two lines of Charles Wolfe’s ‘The Burial of Sir John Moore’ and asked for the name of the writer and the poem’s subject (*LCJ* 16, 1870, Paper 12: 2). And in the preliminary examination for 1886, candidates were asked to name the writers of six literary works including *The Faerie Queen* and *The Canterbury Tales* (*J&PP* 9, 1886, Paper 108: 5). Rarer still were questions such as question 10 on the 1886 paper:

“Poverty of rhyme is the greatest formal difficulty in English poetical composition.” Can you account for this? (*J&PP* 9, 1886, Paper 108: 10)

The Exhibition English examination papers usually contained at least nine questions, and poetry featured at most in only one of these. Competence in English grammar, syntax and vocabulary were the necessary prerequisites for success in this subject, not literary knowledge or appreciation. As such, these examinations functioned as tightly controlled exercises to test the application of grammatical rules and rote learning. This focus was relaxed only occasionally in the 1880s when essay writing was included in at least two of the annual examinations, but even on these occasions it could be argued that the set topics demanded a degree of accuracy and close observation, rather than a vivid imagination:

Describe a sheet of writing paper so as to explain its nature and use to a person ignorant of them (1881).

Write a short account of a football or cricket match, or some pretty spot with which you are acquainted (1884). (*LCJ* 30 1881, Paper 30: 9; and *J&PP* 11, 1884, Paper 34: 10)

### **The Associate of Arts**

The award of the Associate of Arts (AA) to mark the successful completion of secondary education was based on examinations conducted in thirteen subjects. To qualify for the award candidates had to pass in at least four of these, including English and ‘one Ancient or Modern language’ (*LCJ* 19, 1873, Paper 15: 5).<sup>4</sup> The subject English embraced Geography and History and was accorded a maximum of 1000 marks. Maximum marks for Latin and Greek were 800, and those for French, German and Italian 600. All other subjects (Mathematics, Hydrostatics and

Mechanics, Chemistry, Zoology and Botany, Geology, Drawing, and Music) were each worth 300.<sup>5</sup> English comprised a study of grammar and the history of the language, using class texts such as Morell's *Grammar and Analysis*, Trench's *English Past and Present*, and a nominated literary text. The use of another recommended text by Morell and Ihne, *Poetical Reading Book with Aids for Grammatical Analysis etc*, indicates that poetry was a medium for the study of language.<sup>6</sup>

In their 1862 Examination Report, the examiners for the Associate of Arts degree 'strongly recommended' that, in addition to the grammar texts, 'some portion of a standard English Author should be prescribed, to be worked up with Grammar and Dictionary, just as Candidates work up their Xenophon or their Cicero' (*LCJ* 7, 1862, Paper 8:15). The nature of their recommendation provides a clear indication of approaches to the teaching and examining of literature during the next two decades. Literary texts were included in the syllabus and examinations annually from 1863. These included Goldsmith's *The Deserted Village* in 1863, 1864, 1870 and 1872, Byron's 'The Prisoner of Chillon' (1869, 1875), Milton's *Paradise Lost* Book I (1871), Cowper's *The Task* Book I (1873), Scott's 'Waterloo' (1875), a selection of Francis Bacon's essays (1884), and Edmund Spenser's *The Faerie Queen* Book I in 1885. Shakespeare's plays were more often the prescribed literary texts during the 1870s and 80s. These included *Macbeth* (1877, 1880), *The Merchant of Venice* (1865, 1868, 1872, 1879), *Richard II* (1876, 1881), *Julius Caesar* (1882) and *King John* (1883). It is interesting to note that in at least one instance separate literary works for male and female students were prescribed for study. In 1872, girls were examined on Goldsmith's *The Deserted Village* and boys on *The Merchant of Venice* (*LCJ* 18, 1872, Paper 8: 13; and Paper 7: 8).<sup>7</sup>

Initially, the majority of questions in the examination papers focussed on grammar, word derivations, and a knowledge of the history of language. Those on the literary texts maintained this emphasis, but sometimes expected candidates to demonstrate knowledge of the content of the text. The 1864 paper, for example, contained a total of 16 questions, 5 relating to Goldsmith's *The Deserted Village*. Three of these questions demanded knowledge of etymology, parsing and analysis, and the last two tested details of the content of the poem:

Give the meaning and so far as you can trace the etymology of the following words as they occur in 'The Deserted Village' – Resignation, Surly, Decent, Mansion, Welfare, Disaster, Vista, Lawn, Smith, Whisper, Pensive, Brocade.

Parse each word in the following –

His heaven commences ere the world be past.

Analyse according to Morell's second and third schemes the following lines –

To them his heart his love his griefs were given,  
But all his serious thoughts found rest in heaven;  
As some tall cliff that lifts its awful form  
Swells from the vale and midway meets the storm,  
Though round its breast the rolling clouds are spread  
Eternal sunshine settles on its head.

There are three places mentioned in the Deserted Village. Name them, state where they are situate, and how each is mentioned in the poem.

Give in your own language without quotations a brief sketch of the poem called 'The Deserted Village'. (*LCJ* 10, 1864, Paper 4:12)

In these early years, the emphasis on poetic language was rare. In 1870, however, students were asked to comment on the rhyme and to discuss and illustrate figures of speech in Goldsmith's poem; and in the following year a major question on Milton's *Paradise Lost* sought two quotations from the poem to illustrate, in each case, instances of comparisons, metaphorical language and words different in pronunciation and meaning from contemporary English (*LCJ* 16, 1870, Paper 17: 13; and *LCJ* 17, 1871, Paper 18: 11). While the literature texts continued to be a major source for questions on grammar, etymology and syntax, there was an increasing emphasis on their content, themes and literary qualities. This emphasis privileged facts and recall of specific information. The 1872 examination for female candidates included a question asking them to distinguish between rhythm and rhyme and to provide examples of iambic, trochaic and dactylic verse 'from Shakespeare, Milton, Cowper, or Tennyson's songs' (*LCJ* 18, 1872, Paper 8: 9). Two years later, questions on Byron's 'The Prisoner of Chillon' and Scott's 'Waterloo' sought the meaning of specified lines and their context, definitions and examples from the poems of metaphor and personification, the scanning of selected lines of verse, and, finally:

Quote a stanza from the conclusion of 'Waterloo'. What is it called? Explain its structure as to metre and rhyme. (*LCJ* 22, 1875, Paper 49: 11)

One question in the 1877 English paper, obviously drawn from a class text on poetry, indicates that the study of poetry as a literary form was part of the syllabus:

What (according to Dr Abbott) are the three characteristics of poetry?  
Quote Denham's description of the Thames as an example of the last. (*LCP* 25, 1877, Paper 36: 11)

Shakespeare's plays were ideal texts on which to base the study and examination of both language and literature. At least 12 of the 16 questions on the 1877 examination paper were based on *Macbeth*. All but 3 of these used the text as source material to test students' knowledge of language and etymology, literary terms and their skills in paraphrase. Students had to derive words such as 'minion', 'alarum' and 'poison' (Question 4), explain expressions such as 'daggers breech'd with gore' (8), identify allusions including 'Bellona's bridegroom' and 'the Lord's anointed temple' (10), define literary terms such as onomatopoeia, hyperbole and paronomasia and provide examples from the play (9), identify the modern form of 'render'd' in the expression 'The castle's gently render'd', and explain why Shakespeare's word was better (15), and paraphrase seven lines of verse from the play (12). Question 2 asked students to outline the play's plot and provide 'the date of its incidents', and the final question sought information about the source of the play and the date when it was written (*LCP* 25, 1877, Paper 36: 11). The only extension to this form of questioning when *Macbeth* was examined again in 1880 were questions on the characters of Macbeth and Lady Macbeth, the relevance of the play to the time in which it was written, and a question on the metaphorical language of a number of lines (*LCJ* 30, 1881, Paper 32: 11).

Several questions on the plays from various papers in the 1880s were similar to those that became popular in the last decade of the century and, in some instances, were to remain so in the 1900s. These focussed on the function of characters in the plays, textual knowledge and memory work:

Write a paraphrase of King Richard's soliloquy in Pomfret castle. (*LCJ* 32, 1882, Paper 34: 11)

What parts are played in [*Julius Caesar*] (a) by Cassius, and (b) by Mark Antony? (*HAI* 44, 1883, Paper 38: 9)

By whom, and on what occasions, were the following lines spoken?

[This question provided six separate lines from *Julius Caesar*, such as ‘Men at some time are masters of their fates’ and ‘You show’d your teeth like apes, and fawn’d like hounds’.] (*HAI* 44, 1883, Paper 38: 9)

In the scanning of Shakespeare’s lines what deviations do you observe from modern pronunciation? (*HAI* 44, 1883, Paper 38: 9)

[Write] an account of the action of Hubert in *King John*, and a sketch of his character as drawn by Shakspeare. (*J&PP* 2, 1884, Paper 33: 10)

Give some account of the English Drama, before Shakspeare. What play, and by whom written, was there before Shakspeare’s on the subject of King John? (*J&PP* 2, 1884, Paper 33: 10)

The 1885 AA English examination placed greater emphasis on the prescribed literary text than on grammar and the history of language. This paper was divided into two sections, the first part comprising 9 questions on the set text (Book I of Spenser’s *The Faerie Queen*), and the second part comprising 7 questions under the heading ‘Grammar’. The questions on Spenser sought information about events and characters in the poem, and its versification and vocabulary. The final question, however, was one of the rare instances at that time where candidates had opportunities to express personal opinions and judgements, and where the examiner invited a response to a comment about the text:

It has been said that “Spenser never smiles.” Discuss this remark, illustrating your view by reference to passages.

or

In what do you consider the charm of Spenser’s great poem consists? What would you say are its defects? (*J&PP* 9, 1886, Paper 90: 9)

Questions such as these foreshadowed changes in the teaching and examining of literature at this level in the twentieth century. At this time, however, they were the exception rather than the rule. Examiners’ major focus in the final years of the Associate of Arts degree was on grammar, philology and memorisation, as illustrated by their comments about candidates’ performance in the 1888 examination:

The points in which Elizabethan grammar differs from modern usage were noticed by most of the candidates, and the principles that determine such deviations were apprehended by many of them. Considerable skill was shown in modernising Shakespeare’s English, but the more subtle poetry, that underlies so many of the metaphors, was not appreciated [...]. The simpler derivations were correctly given, but the higher philological work was, as might have been anticipated, too superficial. Two well-known passages from the prescribed play were set to be written from memory. The results were

very unsatisfactory: the Candidates were unable to reproduce the language of the poet, and were evidently ignorant of the rules of prosody. (*J&PP* 15, 1888-9, Paper 84: 4)

### **The Tasmanian Scholarship**

Candidates for the Tasmanian scholarship to study at universities in Britain had to be 'above the age of sixteen and under the age of twenty', have been 'resident in the colony for a period of five years' and have taken the degree of Associate of Arts.

Examinations were conducted in the following subjects:

1. Classics – Translations from Greek and Latin authors into English, Greek and Latin composition, Ancient History, Philology.
2. Mathematics – Arithmetic, Algebra, Euclid, Plane Trigonometry.
3. Natural Philosophy – Elementary Statics, Dynamics, and Hydrostatics.
4. Modern History – The History of England.
5. The grammatical structure of the English Language, and French or German, at the option of the Candidate. (*LCJ* 19, 1873, Paper 64: 19)

From a total of 300 marks for the whole examination, Classics and the combined subjects of Mathematics and Natural Philosophy were each accorded 120 marks, and Modern History, English and either French or German each 20 marks. English was thus worth just under 7% of the total marks. These 'weightings' were based on the requirements that would qualify candidates for admission to Oxford or Cambridge universities, the examiners reporting to the Council in 1861 that the allocation of marks reflected 'the relative value which the subjects of examination occupy during the earlier years of an undergraduates career at Oxford or Cambridge' (*LCJ* 6, 1861, Paper 46: 23). The examiners also recommended that in classical studies 'composition in verse should be no less essential than composition in prose' because such would be required 'of every boy at the head of a Public School in England'.<sup>8</sup>

The texts recommended for English at this level confirm that the major emphasis was on the study of the history and structure of language. They included G.P. Marsh's *Student's History of the English Language*, John Earle's *The Philology of the English Tongue* and two books by Richard Trench, *English Past and Present* and *English Synonyms* (*LCJ* 6, 1861, Paper 46: 4; and *LCJ* 25, 1877, Paper 37: 18). In an early report, the examiners also suggested that 'an *English Classic*' such as 'a Book of *Paradise Lost*, or a Play by Shakspeare, should be prescribed for *critical study*' (*LCJ* 6, 1861, Paper 46: 4). Individual texts were not specified and those referred to in any



of the examinations were rarely examined in any detail, other than expecting students to be able to identify writers and their works.

Compared to the increasing emphasis on literary knowledge and analysis in the AA English examination from 1860 to 1890, the format of the Tasmanian Scholarship examination remained virtually unchanged during this period, literary study receiving only limited attention until the mid 1880s. The majority of questions on all examination papers dealt with the history of the language, and were set, no doubt, within the context of courses successful candidates would be likely to pursue at British universities. Typical of these questions were the following:

Contrast the advantages and disadvantages of a copious system of inflection like the Greek and a limited one like the English. (*LCJ* 7, 1862, Paper 53: 18)

Trace back as far as you can the etymology of the following words:- Beef, Mutton, Chivalry, Musket, Alms, Ma'am, Pigmy, Scorch, Lord. (*LCJ* 10, 1864, Paper 5: 12)

Compare as given by Marsh the forms in different Indo-European languages of these words:- door, brother, ten, tooth. Give also the High German forms, and deduce a law for letter-change of dental mutes between Greek, German and English. (*LCJ* 17, 1871, Paper 19: 14)

Wherein did the difference between Danish and the kindred Saxon chiefly consist? What distinct influences of Danish can you trace upon English, either in its vocabulary or in the form of words? (*J&PP* 9, 1886, Paper 89: 5)

The Scholarship papers used literary extracts as sources for questions on philology more frequently than did those for the Associate of Arts degree. Chaucer's works appeared to be studied purely for such a purpose, questions in the 1877 and 1882 papers, for example, expecting candidates to 'turn' quoted lines into modern English, or write the following lines as Chaucer wrote them and then explain how they were pronounced metrically in his day:

And small fowls make melody  
That sleep all the night with open eye.  
(*LCJ* 25, 1877, Paper 37: 15; and *LCJ* 32, 1882, Paper 33: 18)

Across the three decades, examiners regularly used lines from Anglo-Saxon and Middle English texts, as well as from writers such as Shakespeare and Milton, to test candidates' knowledge of grammatical structure and etymology.<sup>9</sup> This practice modelled closely that of the prescribed texts. Earle's *Philology* contained numerous

extracts from Layamon, Chaucer, Gower, Shakespeare, Spenser, Milton, Cowper, Wordsworth, Tennyson and Holmes to illustrate points about the origins of English, pronunciation, syntax and word structure.<sup>10</sup>

At the scholarship level, the prescribed class texts on grammar and the history of the language equated to the syllabus for the subject. Candidates who had worked through these assiduously would have performed well in the examinations, as many questions in all years were based directly on their contents. Five of the questions on the 1875 paper, for example, either asked students to elucidate short quotations from Marsh's *Student History*, or expected them to recognise the literary quotations he used to illustrate his material, as shown in questions 10 and 14:

What derivation of the following words is rejected by Marsh, and what is the correct etymology of each – Cattle, compliment, elf, isle, right, shepster, war, world?

The following quotations occur in your handbook [Marsh's text]. Who are the authors and what their date? In what work does each passage occur? – (a) Language most shows the man. (b) And shrieks the wild sea mew. (c) In him the pure well-head of poesy did dwell. (d) A Star ypointing pyramid. (*LCJ* 22, 1875, Paper 48: 14)

By contrast, texts as literature received limited attention in the examination papers, questions on these invariably representing less than one-fifth of the total questions. And the type of questioning applied to these texts suggests that the 'critical study' they were supposed to foster was very limited in scope. Almost without exception, these questions asked candidates to identify the authors of quoted passages, name the works in which they occurred and the periods in which the writers 'flourished'. Such questions were placed near the end of the examination papers, appearing to concede that there was value in students being able to demonstrate some knowledge of literary history after attending to the major business of the examination. The 1884 examination contained 12 questions, the first 9 addressing aspects of the history of language, Grimm's Law, derivations, etymology, word formation, grammatical constructions and sentence correction. Questions 10 and 11 focussed on literature:

Give a brief account, with dates, of these writers, and their principal works:-  
Bacon, Bede, Chaucer, Macaulay, Spenser, Scott.

Name the authors of the following, and the work in which each occurs:-

- (a) To be wroth with one we love  
Doth work like madness in the brain.

- (b) The spirits of your fathers  
Shall start from every wave.
- (c) Britons never shall be slaves.
- (d) The old order changeth, giving place to new.
- (e) The winter of our discontent.
- (f) The cynosure of neighbouring eyes.
- (g) Who thought of old the oak to rend,  
Dreamed not of the rebound.
- (h) Trailing clouds of glory do we come  
From God who is our home.
- (i) The trivial round, the daily task.
- (j) Welcome to your gory bed,  
Death or Victory!

Perhaps to remind students of the central purpose of English study, the paper then concluded with a question: 'Discuss briefly the various theories of the Origin of Language' (*J&PP* 11, 1884, Paper 32: 16-7).

Literary questions requiring more than purely factual information were rare, and even in these cases they focussed on literary history, rather than literary appreciation and personal response. Most, too, would have been tests of memory and could have required simply the replication of textbook material:

What is meant by rhyme? Discuss its use, and trace its origin. (*LCJ* 17, 1871, Paper 19: 14)

"When thou bileves all thyn one  
Thenne myth thou grede and grone."

From what poem of about what date is this taken? Give the various interpretations that have been suggested for it. (*LCJ* 19, 1873, Paper 64: 15)

What attempts have been made to introduce the metres of Greek and Latin poetry into English? Quote *briefly* from any poems you may refer to. (*J&PP* 9, 1886, Paper 88: 21)

Sketch briefly the history of the English Sonnet, and write out any one sonnet that you consider especially beautiful. (*J&PP* 9, 1886, Paper 88: 21)

Give a sketch of the Pre-Shaksperean Drama, and write a life of Shakspere. Account for the great development of the Drama in Elizabeth's reign. (*LCJ* 34, 1883. Paper 38: 14)

These questions, and that on the 1886 paper asking candidates to write a 'short study of any one of Shakespeare's women', were indicative of standard approaches to examining literary texts at the university in the first decades of the next century.

## **The University of Tasmania**

The Tasmanian Parliament passed the Act to establish the University of Tasmania on 5<sup>th</sup> December 1889 (53 Vict. No. 41). Sections IX, XI and XIV of the Act invested the University Council with the power to confer degrees in Arts, Science and Law, appoint lecturers, and exercise the powers previously invested in the Tasmanian Council of Education. Three lecturers were appointed near the end of 1892 and in December of that year first-year degree examinations were conducted in the three disciplines. Initially, the University Council conducted examinations for the Associate of Arts degree and the Exhibition and Tasmanian Scholarships in accordance with the Council of Education regulations. It quickly exercised its power to 'make Statutes or Regulations' to introduce changes to the nature of these three awards (53 Vict. No 41, section 15).

The University statute 'Of Public Examinations' decreed that two public examinations would be held annually, the Junior and Senior Public examinations. The Senior Public Examination in effect replaced the Associate of Arts degree, and the five best candidates in the Junior Public Examination received 'Junior Exhibitions' similar in function to the earlier Exhibition Scholarships (*Calendar* 1891, 20-4, 89).<sup>11</sup> The University Amendment Act (54 Vict. No. 25) continued the Tasmanian Scholarship award examination until 1891, thereby supporting existing scholarship winners to pursue their studies at British universities for a further four years (*Calendar* 1892, 101). At the same time, it replaced these awards with University Scholarships to provide financial support for students pursuing studies at the University of Tasmania. Two University Scholarships were awarded annually: one to the candidate with the best results in the Senior Public English and Ancient and Modern Languages examinations; the other to the best candidate in Mathematics and Science (*Calendar* 1891, 25).

The University Council's Annual Report for 1892 announced the appointment of William Henry Williams as inaugural Lecturer in English and Classics (*J&PP* 28, 1893, Paper 32: 5).<sup>12</sup> A Cambridge graduate and former Headmaster of Newington College, Sydney, Williams gained this post from a field of twenty-one applicants (Fig. 5). He assumed responsibility for the JPE and SPE English syllabuses, served as examiner in the subjects in various years for the next three decades and examined



Fig. 5. Professor William Henry Williams, MA (Cambridge).  
Foundation Professor of Classics and English at the University of Tasmania.

Greek and Latin for some years in addition to undertaking his university responsibilities.<sup>13</sup>

### **The Junior Public Examination**

The University's Regulations made it compulsory for all candidates for the Junior Public Examination (JPE) to pass a preliminary examination in reading and dictation before undertaking the full examination. For the JPE award, students were required to pass in 5 subjects and sit for no more than 9. These subjects were grouped, and students had to gain passes in 2 subjects from Group A (English, History, Geography), 1 subject from Group B (Latin, Greek, French and German), Arithmetic, and 1 other subject either from Groups A and B, or Groups C (Algebra, Geometry) or D (Elementary Science and Drawing) (*Calendar* 1891, 21). Although these regulations could be interpreted to mean that English was not a compulsory subject, result lists during the decade indicate that all students sat for the subject and most students sat for a total of 9 subjects.<sup>14</sup> On this basis, English was worth between 10% and 20% of the total examination marks, depending on the number of subjects examined. The first examination under these rules was conducted in 1891.

The JPE English syllabus for that year was defined simply as 'English Grammar, including Analysis of Sentences' (*Calendar* 1891, 21). By 1900 this had changed to:

#### **ENGLISH GRAMMAR –**

Parsing, analysis of easy sentences, and general questions. Writing from dictation.

A short composition on a given subject, or a paraphrase of a few lines of simple poetry. (*Calendar* 1899, appendix)

No texts were specified during this period and the only evidence of the work students undertook is found in the examination papers. The English examinations were less intense than the earlier Exhibition examinations conducted by the Tasmanian Council of Education, and usually contained no more than 8 questions, to be answered in two hours rather than three.

The JPE papers continued the practice of examining candidates' ability to parse and analyse sentences or short passages, and their knowledge of basic grammar. Frequent questions on punctuation and the correction of sentences indicated an increased emphasis on testing functional English. Vocabulary exercises and questions testing

candidates' practical application of their knowledge of number, gender, comparison, the possessive case and tense replaced those on the derivation of words and the history of language. Questions asking students to paraphrase passages of prose or poetry and to write essays were regular features of the JPE papers. Most of the essay topics related to children's experiences, for example 'Bicycling' (1896), 'Springtime in Tasmania' (1897), and 'Football' (1899).<sup>15</sup> The most conservative examination during this decade was that taken by the young Roy Bridges of Queen's College in 1898, when all 8 questions focussed on grammar, vocabulary, punctuation and the history of language.<sup>16</sup>

Poetry featured rarely in the JPE examinations during this period. In 1896, one of the essay topics was 'Sir Walter Scott', and papers for the next two years contained a verse from an unseen poem that candidates were instructed to punctuate and paraphrase (1897) and analyse and parse (1898). Question 5 of the 1900 English paper asked students to paraphrase the first twelve lines of Brutus's funeral speech from *Julius Caesar*. Examiners' reports in these years focussed on students' ability to use language rather than appreciate it, examiner Waldron expressing disappointment in 1898 that 'too little attention is paid to the niceties of our language, without a correct understanding of which good, clear English cannot be written' (33).

### **The Senior Public Examination**

The University's Regulation 'Of the Senior Public Examination' decreed that candidates had to pass at least 5 subjects from a list of 19. Subjects were arranged in 5 groups and in order to qualify candidates had to pass in 2 from Group A (English Language and Literature, History and Geography), 1 from Group B (Latin, Greek, French, German, Italian), 1 from Group C (Arithmetic, Algebra, Geometry, Trigonometry, Applied Mathematics) and 1 from either Group A, B and C, or from Groups D (Physics, Chemistry, Zoology, Geology) or E (Drawing and Music) (*Calendar* 1891, 23). No candidates were permitted to sit for more than 12 subjects; most sat for at least 7.<sup>17</sup> Minor but significant changes were made to these requirements in the mid 1890s to ensure that students who wished to matriculate achieved passes in English Language and Literature, History, a language, Arithmetic and at least 2 other subjects (*Calendar* 1894, 37). Candidates who matriculated with

outstanding results were considered for the two annual Tasmanian University Scholarships.

English Language and Literature at this level comprised three areas of study: grammar including analysis of sentences; a short essay on a given topic; and the study of two nominated literary texts (*Calendar* 1891, 27). Two literary texts were prescribed annually for the Senior Public Examination (SPE) during the 1890s and at least one of these was usually either poetry or a Shakespearean play. Poetry prescriptions included the first canto of Book I of Spenser's *The Faerie Queen* and selections from Tennyson (1892), Milton's *Paradise Lost* Book II (1893), Scott's *Lay of the Last Minstrel* (1895), selections from Milton's shorter works (1896), Macaulay's *Lays of Ancient Rome* (1897) and the second part of Palgrave's *Golden Treasury* in 1899. Shakespeare's plays were *Richard II* (1894 and 1899), *Julius Caesar* (1898) and *The Tempest* (1900).<sup>18</sup>

The SPE examination papers were shorter than those for the AA or Tasmanian Scholarships and placed less emphasis on philology and etymology. No texts on these topics, or on grammar and language, were prescribed. Most papers contained 8 questions that included an essay, a short passage to be analysed, a list of words whose meaning and derivation had to be explained and several questions on the prescribed literary texts. Each year, at least 2 questions on the literary texts sought explanation of allusions from quoted lines and a knowledge of context. The most traditional of the questions on the literary texts were those on Palgrave's *Golden Treasury* in 1899. Here poetry was the medium for testing language and grammar, as well as a detailed knowledge of a number of poems:

Give the meaning and derivation of:- diapason, sequacious, climacteric [and an additional 7 words from the poems].

Comment on the grammar of the following:-

- (a) "And hid his head for shame,  
As his inferior flame  
The new-enlighten'd world no more should need"  
[and four further extracts].

Explain the following allusions, and quote the passages in which they occur:-

- (a) "Time will run back, and fetch the age of gold."  
(b) "And old Damoetas loved to hear our song."



[and a further three quotes.]

Every examination in the decade expected candidates to be able to quote accurately memorised passages of twelve to fourteen lines from poems or Shakespeare's plays, and to demonstrate detailed textual knowledge of the works. Prose works were examined on the basis of factual content:

Give the substance of Goldsmith's account of *The Man in Black, or of The Fame Machine*. (1896)

Describe the Battle of the Nile, giving a chart to illustrate the relative positions of either side (1897)

How far is it true that Clive with a handful of Englishmen conquered India? (1898)

Give the Spectator's description of –

- (a) Himself,
- (b) Sir Roger's chaplain,
- (c) Sir Roger at the Assizes,

noticing in each case instances of his humour. (1899)

An innovation for examinations at this level was the inclusion of an essay. Each paper in the 1890s provided a choice of three topics, some of which were drawn directly from the literature studied: 'Friends always advise when they begin to despise' (1896); 'The evil that men do lives after them' (1898); and 'They also serve who only stand and wait' (1899).

At the turn of the century, then, Shakespeare and poets such as Cowper, Milton, Spenser, Goldsmith, Scott, Macaulay and Tennyson featured in the secondary school English curriculum. In addition, some extracts from Anglo-Saxon poetry were included in the Tasmanian Scholarship examinations, and the inclusion of the second section of Palgrave's *Golden Treasury* in the 1899 SPE syllabus familiarised students with seventeenth-century poets such as John Dryden, Andrew Marvell, George Herbert, Ben Jonson, Robert Herrick and Thomas Carew. In the main, poetry was examined (and one assumes therefore taught) as an exercise in language and syntax and not as appreciation. The 'critical study' recommended by examiners in the 1860s did not extend to a consideration of literary themes or poetry as art. In the 1900 SPE English examination the first choice offered students in the essay question was to write on 'The pleasures and advantages of the study of English Literature'. Evidence

suggests that students taught wholly within the constraints of the examination requirements would have responded by acknowledging their expanding knowledge of the structure and history of language derived from a study of the literary texts, rather than an appreciation of 'ennobling' ideas and the aesthetics of verse.

### **Poetry at the university**

The Act to establish the University of Tasmania came into force on the 1<sup>st</sup> January 1890. During that year and the next, and before lecturers had been appointed, the University Council's Board of Degrees and Qualifications prepared rules and course outlines for degrees in Arts and Science, including specific details of the first year subjects for each degree. This information was published in the 1892 *Calendar* together with prescribed texts for each subject and lists of additional texts recommended 'for study or reference' (79-86). The course outline for the subject English Language and Literature I contained three elements:

- History of the English Language.
- Period of Literature from Chaucer to Milton, with prescribed books.
- English Prose Composition. (82)

Prescribed reading for the course was Chaucer's Prologue to *The Canterbury Tales*, Shakespeare's *Richard II* and *Hamlet*, and Milton's *Areopagitica*. Additional texts for reading and reference were:

- Morris's Historical Outlines of English Accidence.
- Ward's Chaucer
- Symond's Sidney
- Church's Spenser.
- Abbott's Shakespearean Grammar.
- Brooke's Milton Primer
- Church's Bacon. (86)

Davis notes that the members of the University Council who wrote this course were 'a group of citizens, many who were not graduates' (23). Their lack of expertise in the study and teaching of the subject and possible desire to demonstrate the degree of rigour expected by the new university are revealed by the ambitious nature of the course, embracing the works of major writers spanning four centuries. The first Arts degree examinations were held in December 1892 and conducted by Professors Tucker, Lyle, Laurie and Morris from Melbourne University (*Calendar* 1894, 84). Six candidates sat the examination and all failed, because, according to Davis, the

examiners did not test knowledge of the set texts. Following complaints, the University Council 'decided to pass all candidates' (27).

William Henry Williams was appointed lecturer in Classics and English Literature in September 1892 and began teaching the next year. His three-year undergraduate English course operated for the first time in 1894. The first-year course covered the period of literature from 1560 to 1660 and the history of the language. The prescribed texts were Shakespeare's *King Lear* and *As You Like It*, Bacon's essay 'The Advancement of Learning' and, for students attempting Honours, Marlowe's *Edward II* and More's *Utopia*. Skeat's *Primer of English Etymology* was the language text and Saintsbury's *A History of Elizabethan Literature* the background text for literature. The second-year course covered the period 1660 to 1780 using Dryden's *Absalom and Achitophel*, Pope's *Satires and Epistles*, Swift's *Battle of the Books* and *Tale of a Tub* and selections from Addison and Steele's *The Spectator*. Honours students also studied Pope's *Essay on Man* and two essays by Burke. The background text for this year was Edmund Gosse's *A History of Eighteenth Century Literature*. The third-year course covered literature from 1340 to 1560 using 'The Prologue', 'The Knight's Tale' and 'The Nonne Prestes Tale' from Chaucer's *The Canterbury Tales*, and Skeat's *Specimens of English Literature from the 'Ploughman's Crede' to the 'Shepheardes Calender'*. Honours students studied Langland's *The Vision of William concerning Piers the Plowman* and Chaucer's *The Legend of Good Women*. The recommended background text for this year was the second volume of Ten Brink's *English Literature (Calendar 1894, 56, 59-60, 63)*. The structure of this undergraduate program, with only minor modifications and additions, remained in place until Williams retired at the end of 1925.

Williams's approach to the teaching and examining of the subject reflected his Cambridge background. He was a Trinity College man who had studied Classics and had known E.J. Furnivall, one of the chief promoters of the *New Oxford Dictionary* and founder of the Early English Texts Society, and the etymologist and lexicographer W.W. Skeat. Williams graduated with first-class honours in the classical tripos in 1876, shared the 'Declamation Prize' with Alfred Tennyson's son and developed a particular interest and expertise in Elizabethan and pre-Elizabethan English (Macmillan 61).<sup>19</sup> It was natural, therefore, that much of the early work in

English at the University of Tasmania focussed on the history, structure and etymology of the language, and that most of the literature was studied within this context.

Questions on the 1894 English examination papers for first and second-year students demonstrate Williams's approach to the subject. The three first-year papers examined the history and structure of the language, the English authors for the Pass award, and those for the Honours award. These papers contained 40 questions in all, 16 of which related to the structure and history of the language, or expected knowledge about the vocabulary and allusions contained in cited passages from the texts.<sup>20</sup> Nine questions asked for facts about writers and their works, including historical sources. Most of the 11 questions expecting knowledge of the content of literary works were based on Bacon's essays and More's *Utopia*. Three questions on the dramatic works examined theme and character, and 1 expected students to scan cited lines explaining 'any metrical peculiarities'. Eleven of the 24 questions on the two second-year papers for pass awards examined either general aspects of eighteenth-century literature, or the historical background of specific texts, but only 6 questions examined the content, theme and style of individual texts. Two questions asked candidates to quote directly from works, 3 sought information about allusions from cited passages and 2 expected a comparison of different writers' themes and style.<sup>21</sup> On this basis, 66% of the questions in these examinations dealt directly with historical aspects of language and literature, and 21% of the questions expected a sound knowledge of the factual content of prescribed texts. Only the very few questions demanding discussion of theme and character, or a comparison of different works, examined more sophisticated skills than simply a recall of material from either the prescribed literary texts or Skeat's *Primer of English Etymology* and Saintsbury's *Elizabethan Literature*.

The extent to which these approaches were adopted in the teaching and examining of poetry is demonstrated by an analysis of the 1895 and 1900 English examination papers. Table 15 lists the topics and writers examined in these years. Apart from expecting candidates to write 'a short life of Milton' and to identify the 'author, subject and approximate date' of a list of works, including the poem 'The Mirror of Magistrates', the only other poetry questions on the 1895 first-year English papers

were six questions on Spenser's *The Faerie Queen*, Book I. Two of these expected students to identify the literary influences in the poem and '[t]race and illustrate the different lines of allegory' employed. A third question expected students to comment on three quotations from the poem. The remaining questions all related to the poem's language: the 'characteristics of Spenser's language' and the 'Spenserian stanza'; the meaning and derivation of words such as 'seeayne', 'buxom', 'frounce' and 'warray'; and explanations of particular phrases and allusions such as 'Orion's hound', 'bad excheat' and 'trinall triplicities'. In 1900, the essay question on Spenser's *The Faerie Queen* asked for an outline of the poet's 'scope, metre, language and poetical qualities'. And if the last part of this question appeared to invite students' personal judgements about Spenser's poem, such was the case in the only other questions on poetry, one asking for an appreciation of Milton's early poems, and the other for a discussion of the merits of Caroline poetry.

Poetry questions in the second-year English papers for both 1895 and 1900 expected candidates to provide biographical details about the poets and information about the content of the prescribed texts, but provided little opportunity for candidates to express critical judgements or personal opinions. Most of these questions began with instructions such as: 'Give a brief account of [...]'; 'Give the author, date and subject of [...]'; 'Estimate the influence of [...]'; 'Comment on [...]'; and 'To whom do the following lines refer [...]'. Literary history featured strongly in these examinations, particularly an emphasis on the antecedents and genesis of works by writers such as Dryden and Pope:

Explain the circumstances which led to the composition of (a) the *Religio Laici*, (b) the *Hind and the Panther*. What does Swift say of the latter? (1895)

Trace the genesis of the *Essay on Man* to (a) the circumstances of the time, (b) previous literature on the subject. (1900)

The seven questions on Chaucer in the third-year 1895 English paper demonstrated clearly that this poet's work was studied as a linguistic and etymological exercise, rather than as literature:

1. Describe the state in which Chaucer found the English language, and the influence which he exercised upon it.
2. Explain the grammatical and prosodical value of the final *e*, with examples.
3. Conjugate typical verbs, both strong and weak.

4. Parse the words italicised in:-  
 (a) King Capaneus that *starf* at Thebes. [And a further four examples.]
5. Give the meaning and derivation of :- *tabard, gepow, bracer, lazer*...[.]
6. Describe the functions and position in society of a Yeman, a Frere, a Frankeleyn, a Persoun, a Reve, a Sompnour, a Pardoner.
7. Paraphrase and comment on:-  
 [Fourteen extracts were provided, ranging in length from one to eight lines.]

Five years later, all 7 questions on Chaucer's poetry focussed on language, 3 being identical in nature to the second, third and fourth questions in the 1895 paper. Other questions asked for the plural, genitive singular and dative of given words, expected students to distinguish between the definite and indefinite form of adjectives and provide the rule for the plural of adjectives, and to parse nine words. A further question asked students to scan five lines and explain any irregularities. The final question instructed students to rewrite sixteen separate one-line quotations 'in literal modern English, and explain the words in italics'.

Many of the examination questions on poetry during this decade confirm the emphasis given to the study of literary periods and biographical information about individual poets, factual information about their publications, the subject matter of the poems and the sources from which they were drawn. Typical of such questions are the following:

Give some account of the life and writings of *any two* of the following:-  
 Spenser – Ben Jonson – Milton – Jeremy Taylor – Herrick. (English I, 1893)

Give a brief account of the life, works and literary characteristics of John Dryden. (English II, 1895)

Give Pope's theories as to (a) the predominant passion, (b) the state of nature, (c) the existence of evil. (English II, 1895)

Who were the "poets of the decadence"? Mention their more important works. (English II, 1899)

What were the chief works in prose and verse by which Chaucer was influenced? (English III, 1895)

Trace the "Dawn of Naturalism" in poetry, and give some account of the leading authors and works that contributed to that movement. (English II, 1894)

The imperative 'Give' in three of these questions suggests that students were expected to replicate facts and ideas presented either in lectures or in the prescribed texts. This is confirmed when some of the examination questions are compared with specific passages from the set texts. The English II question, 'Estimate the influence of Waller upon the form of English poetry' (1895), was obviously based on the opening chapter of Gosse's *A History of Eighteenth Century Literature* (2-4); and the question, 'Discuss the merits of Caroline poetry' (English I, 1900), related directly to eight pages of Saintsbury's *A History of Elizabethan Literature* (386-93). Similarly, the English I question 'Name (with dates) the poems comprised in the first period of Milton's literary production, and write an appreciation of each' (English I, 1900) was based on Saintsbury's analysis of the topic (318-22). Students familiar with Gosse's discussion of Thomas Gray's standing as a poet (239-41) would have answered with ease the question on the same topic in the 1900 English II paper: 'Examine the claims of Thomas Gray to a position in the chief rank of English poets'.<sup>22</sup> One form of 'giving' Williams did not expect often was the replication of sections of poems from memory. There was only one such question in the six examination papers of 1895 and 1900, that on Pope's poetry: 'Complete the couplets beginning [...]' (English II 1900).<sup>23</sup>

Williams maintained this approach to the teaching and examining of English with only minor changes for the next two decades. John Butt has shown that similar methods of teaching and examining English operated at universities in Great Britain in the last decade of the nineteenth century and the first years of the twentieth century. He describes these approaches as being dominated by philology, factual information about texts and authors, historical surveys of 'excessive breadth' and examination questions which 'allowed no room for difference of opinion' (220).

At this early stage, Williams was apparently little influenced by the debate about tertiary studies in English that was emerging among scholars and commentators in England during the last decade of the century. This debate centred on the need to 'provide systematic instruction in Literature as distinguished from Philology', and was actively pursued by John Churton Collins who opposed Oxford University's intention to establish a Philological Tripos similar to that already established at

Cambridge (*Study of English* v). Collins championed the need to teach literature as literature and not in a format that had developed for the teaching of Classics:

Since [Literature's] recognition as a subject of teaching it has been taught wherever it has been seriously taught on the same principle as the Classics. It has been regarded not as the expression of art and genius, but as mere material for the study of words, as mere pabulum for philology. All that constitutes its intrinsic value has been ignored. All that constitutes its value as a liberal study has been ignored. Its masterpieces have been resolved into exercises in grammar, syntax and etymology. Its history has been resolved into a barren catalogue of names, works, and dates. No faculty but the faculty of memory has been called into play in studying it. (*Study of English* 21-2)

Collins was particularly concerned to ensure a balanced approach to the critical treatment of literature. He believed that too much importance was given to verbal analysis, that the treatment of form and style was dealt with 'very inefficiently', but that the analysis of 'sentiment, ethic and thought' was neglected completely (*Study of English* 39). He argued the importance of literature as a vehicle for disseminating a country's culture, and a means by which to 'cultivate [...] elevate and refine' at a time when more utilitarian subjects such as natural science and political economy were 'gaining ground' in the universities (Bacon 307). Collins championed the importance of providing appropriate training for teachers in order to achieve these aims. He believed this training was not provided

by such institutions as the Medieval and Modern Languages Tripos at Cambridge, by the establishment of Schools in which the leading and master Classics of the world have no place at all, in which Literature on the side of art, history, and aesthetic is wholly ignored, and in which the study of our own Classics is saddled and incumbered by a lumbering and repulsive apparatus of Gothic, Moeso-Gothic, Icelandic, and Old Saxon [...]. (*Study of English* 54-5)

To support his case for the establishment of a School of Literature rather than Philology at Oxford, Collins sought the opinions of 'almost every eminent authority on Education and on Literature in England' during the second half of the 1880s (*Study of English* 97). Among the many replies he quotes is one from the Headmaster of Clifton College who welcomed Collins's approach and contrasted it to the current teaching of literature which comprised 'the getting up of little annotated text-books, with their scraps of philology and ready-made criticism and antiquarianism, for purposes of examination, very often at the expense of neglecting the text'



(*Study of English* 102). Collins and the Headmaster were of one mind about this practice, the former noting that a radical defect of the Clarendon Press publications was their failure to distinguish between Philology and Literature:

Instead of regarding a great poem or a great drama as the expression of genius and art, they regard it merely as a monument of language. They dwell with tedious and unnecessary minuteness on points which can interest none but grammarians and philologists, and out of this narrow sphere they seldom or never travel unless perhaps to explain some historical allusion, to discuss some problem in antiquities, or to accumulate wholly superfluous passages. (*Study of English* 57)

Collins's attack on such texts was strong. Their approach failed 'to enlarge a youth's mind, or to refine his taste', to 'awaken rational curiosity or inspire a love of literature for its own sake' so that they were 'not simply an intellectual but a moral evil' (*Study of English* 60). He expressed concern that texts such as these with their 'pedantry and dilettantism' were not only texts 'in our own Schools, Colleges, and Institutes, but in those of the Colonies also, all over the English-speaking world' (*Study of English* 61). And to a considerable extent, Williams's own publications at this time exemplified this approach. His edition of Dryden's *The Hind and the Panther*, for example, is almost evenly balanced in quantity between a reproduction of the text of the poem (some seventy-eight pages) and the editor's introduction and notes (seventy pages).<sup>24</sup>

Within the context of this debate, it is certain that Williams supported the status quo, such was his training and background. It is significant, too, that his appointment to the University of Tasmania was as lecturer and then professor of both Classics and English Literature. It was only to be expected that his approach to the teaching of both subjects was conditioned by that practised in Classics at Cambridge when he was a student there in the 1870s. While it is true that Collins and his more progressive contemporaries supported the teaching of English literature in conjunction with the Classics, they believed it should be taught as more than a philological study, but rather 'linked with life' and as a necessary prelude to the study of modern works (*Study of English* 146). The criticisms they directed against the Cambridge Tripos would have applied equally to the curriculum taught and examined by Williams in Tasmania at the turn of the century. Its philological and historical emphasis took no apparent account of a developing preoccupation among

commentators in England with literature's humanizing and moral powers. There was no local support for any change to the existing curriculum; in fact, any change at that time could have jeopardized Tasmania's application for formal affiliation with Oxford and Cambridge universities (Davis 43). Any major change to the English courses of study did not occur until Albert Booth Taylor assumed the Chair of English in 1926. The changes he introduced over succeeding decades reflected his Oxford studies under the direction of Walter Raleigh, the first Professor of English Literature appointed to that university.

### **Poetry at the turn of the century**

The Tasmanian census of 1901 revealed that there were 129,422 ten-year olds in Tasmania, 93.39% of whom could read and write (*J&PP* 1903, Paper 29). Most of these students were in Education Department schools and experienced regular contact with poetry as part of their reading lessons. Poetry itself, however, was given little official status within the curriculum and was taught primarily to improve oral and written language skills, powers of comprehension and general knowledge, rather than to foster literary appreciation. Tasmanian Education Department official reports and syllabus documents from 1850 to 1900 provide little evidence to suggest that poetry was taught for moral or cultural purposes.

In his lecture 'English in Schools' (1870), Seeley maintained that the first steps in a 'proper course of an English education' were to teach pupils to read and then to read 'distinctly and expressively' by teaching elocution. He claimed that poetry was a means of cultivating a 'sense of rhythm' and promoting an appreciation of 'the delightfulness of speech'. He believed this was the appropriate approach early in a child's education because it required 'little brain-work or reasoning' and could 'be made interesting to the youngest boys'. Young pupils, he wrote, 'should be called upon to commit to memory a great deal of poetry, and then to recite it with due attention to the laws of metre and emphasis' (231-2). Teaching practices in Tasmanian primary schools in the second half of the nineteenth century reflected these ideas. At the end of his lecture, however, Seeley discussed the civilizing power of literature, claiming in particular that 'the study of a native literature has a moral effect' by providing 'air for the soul's growth' and the 'true ground and foundation of patriotism' (237, 238). Many Tasmanian children were denied these more

sophisticated benefits arising from the study of poetry. And although the small minority capable of understanding the poetry in the senior class readers may well have been influenced positively by the words and thoughts of 'great' poets (229), they had very little opportunity to learn about their Australian poetic inheritance.

Those Tasmanian pupils who achieved success at the upper levels of the elementary schools studied the works of the British poets. Although some American poetry was included in each of the class readers, Australian poetry was not recognised except to a limited extent in the *New Australian School Series*. Most of the poetry read and taught was didactic in purpose and serious in tone until the 1880s, when historical narratives of adventure and patriotism replaced the moral and religious poems of the earlier decades. By the turn of the century, discursive poets such as Cowper and Goldsmith were disappearing from the primary school poetry syllabus in favour of more dramatic and descriptive writers such as Tennyson, Byron and Kipling. These and their contemporaries provided senior primary students with a cultural heritage less overtly moral in intent, but still predominantly British in outlook

In December 1900, some two hundred junior secondary students and sixty-eight senior secondary students undertook the JPE and SPE examinations in English, while fewer than twenty students completed similar examinations at the university.<sup>25</sup> Neither of the secondary examinations for that year included questions on poetry, although both papers included at least one question on a Shakespearean play. In the previous decade, poetry had been included in the SPE prescriptions on six occasions, but it was not to feature in the JPE study requirements until the second decade of the twentieth century. The students studying English at the university in 1900, however, were examined on a number of standard poets extending from Chaucer to Pope. During the 1890s, no poet more recent than the eighteenth century featured in university courses, and at the SPE level the only exceptions to this situation were Tennyson (1892) and Macaulay (1894). No Australian poetry was studied at secondary or tertiary levels.

The methods of examining poetry for the SPE indicated that poetry was a useful means of testing candidates' knowledge of grammar and literary allusions and the ability to memorise extended passages of verse. University questions on poetry tested

similar knowledge and also relevant biographical and historical information. Some examination questions at this level appeared to demand critical judgement, but they were usually based directly on critical material readily available from the prescribed background texts.

There is no evidence that poetry was taught in secondary and university classes for any cultural or moral purpose. Poetry was a useful means of training the memory and a valuable resource for studying both the history and structure of language and the historical development of English literature. Only for these reasons did poetry occupy any position of privilege within the classroom and lecture hall.

Poetry's status within education changed significantly during the first half of the twentieth century. It was acknowledged and taught as a unique art form and recognised by the Education Department as a means of instilling cultural, social and moral values. Poetry was also promoted as a source of personal pleasure and enjoyment. Values such as these were similar to those that Collins had recognised twenty years earlier when he described literature as 'much too serious a thing to be abandoned to unskilled teachers or to philologists', and 'of the utmost value and importance' if studied as 'an instrument of culture' and 'in a liberal and enlightened spirit' ('English Literature' 313). Teaching approaches based on these values were initiated in Tasmania firstly in primary classrooms when the influence of Thomas Arnold's older brother Matthew reached the State and prompted significant changes to curriculum content and pedagogy. William Neale was the first 'missionary' and 'preacher' of this new culture.

## Tables

### 15

Subjects, texts and writers featured in the University of Tasmania English Language and Literature examination papers for 1895 and 1900.

LEVEL	1895	1900
ENGLISH 1: 1 <sup>st</sup> paper	History of the Language History of Elizabethan Literature: dramatists, Milton, prose writers	History of the Language Elizabethan Literature: Lyly, Spenser, the Bible, Beaumont and Fletcher, Milton, Caroline poetry
2 <sup>nd</sup> paper	Shakespeare's <i>Hamlet</i> Shakespeare's <i>The Tempest</i> Spenser's <i>Faerie Queene</i> , I	Shakespeare's <i>Macbeth</i> Shakespeare's <i>As You Like It</i> More: <i>Utopia</i> , Book I
3 <sup>rd</sup> paper	Greene: <i>Friar Bacon</i> Milton: <i>Areopagitica</i>	Marlowe's <i>Edward II</i> Sidney's <i>Apologie for Poetrie</i>
ENGLISH 2: 1 <sup>st</sup> paper	Eighteenth-century Literature: Waller, Dryden, Pope, Swift, Addison and Steele.	18 <sup>th</sup> Century Literature: Marvell, Shadwell, Pope, Locke, Hume, Gray,
2 <sup>nd</sup> paper	Dryden's <i>Religio Laici</i> and <i>The Hind and the Panther</i> Pope's <i>Essay on Man</i> Swift's <i>Battle of the Books</i> and <i>Tale of a Tub</i> Addison & Steele – selections from the <i>Spectator</i>	Dryden's <i>Absalom and Ahitophel</i> and <i>Religio Laici</i> Pope's <i>Essay on Man</i> Swift – selections Addison & Steele – selections from the <i>Spectator</i>
3 <sup>rd</sup> paper	Pope's <i>Satires</i> and <i>Epistles</i> Burke's <i>Reflections on the French Revolution</i>	Cowley's <i>Essays</i> Burke's 'Speeches on America'
ENGLISH 3: 1 <sup>st</sup> paper	Medieval Literature, including questions on Wyclif, Occleve, Lydgate, Miracle Plays, the Moralities, impact of Italian Renaissance, etc	Medieval Literature including questions on Confessio Amantis, religious drama, Skelton, etc.
2 <sup>nd</sup> paper	Chaucer's <i>Canterbury Tales</i> Skeat's <i>Specimens of English Literature</i>	Chaucer's <i>Canterbury Tales</i> Skeat's <i>Specimens of English Literature</i>
3 <sup>rd</sup> paper	.....	Langland's <i>Piers the Plowman</i> Udall: <i>Ralph Roister Doister</i>

The third examination paper was for Honours. No third paper for English III was set in 1895.

Authors and titles of these texts are reproduced as they were printed in the *Calendars* for the two years.

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## Notes

<sup>1</sup> Butler provides a full account of Franklin's attempts to establish higher education in the colony (24-36).

<sup>2</sup> French ('Tasmanian Council') provides a detailed description of this public discussion and debate (132-3).

<sup>3</sup> The Council's 1888 Annual Report notes Melbourne University's recognition of the Tasmanian Associate of Arts degree. *J&PP* 15, 1888-9, Paper 85: 5.

<sup>4</sup> AA Regulations for the previous year stated that successful candidates would be those who satisfied the examiners in at least four subjects, 'Latin being one' (*LCJ* 18, 1872, Paper 7: 19).

<sup>5</sup> On this basis, English was worth approximately 18% of all allocated marks, but between 35% and 40% of the marks in the four subjects which candidates had to pass to qualify for the AA award.

<sup>6</sup> Trench's text was prescribed in 1864 (*LCJ* 9, 1864, Paper 4: 12). Morell's texts were prescribed in 1873 (*LCJ* 19, 1873, Paper 65: 29). Despite an extensive search, it has not been possible to trace the publication details of Morell's *Grammar and Analysis* or Morell and Ihne's *Poetical Reading Book with Aids for Grammatical Analysis*.

<sup>7</sup> Examination papers on both texts focussed predominantly on grammar and etymology, but in one question the girls were invited to quote any passage from the poem 'which appears to you conspicuous for poetical beauty' (13). The boys were not privileged with any such open-ended invitation in their questions of Shakespeare's play (8).

<sup>8</sup> In succeeding years, an annual prize was awarded for the best translation into Latin elegiacs of an English poem. In 1868, George Frederick Archer was awarded books to the value of £5 for his translation of Longfellow's 'The Reaper and the Flowers'. *LCP* 14, 1868, Paper 35: 26.

<sup>9</sup> See, for example, question 4 of the 1869 and question 2 of the 1885 examination papers. *LCJ* 15, 1869, Paper 67: 9; and *J&PP* 5, 1885, Paper 40: 5.

<sup>10</sup> See, for example, pages 78, 106, 122, 134, 173, 290, 353, 423, 499 and 533 of Earl's *Philology*.

<sup>11</sup> As acknowledged in the text, specific information about the JPE, SPE and University English courses is drawn from the *University of Tasmania Calendars*, published annually from 1891.

<sup>12</sup> Dale (37) and Horner (508) are not accurate in stating that Williams was appointed lecturer in 1894. His selection for the post was confirmed before the end of 1892 and he began work at the University in January 1893. See the University Council's Annual Report for that year (*Calendar* 1894, 93).

<sup>13</sup> Williams graduated from Cambridge in 1876. The nature of his training and literary pursuits are revealed in his publications. These included an edition of Dryden's *The Hind and the Panther* (1900) intended for the use of 'classes in schools and the junior students of colonial universities', an edition of *Ralph Roister Doister*, co-edited with P.A. Robin, which included an extensive preface, glossary and notes (1901), and an edition of *Jacke Jugeler*, based on the original text in the collection of the Duke of Devonshire (1914). Williams also published a selection from Thackeray's *The Roundabout Papers* 'intended for the young' (1929) and an edition of Matthew Green's *The Spleen* with introduction, notes and appendices (1936).

<sup>14</sup> See for example the 1893 and 1897 lists of results. *University Calendar* 1894, 101; and *University Calendar* 1898, Appendix.

<sup>15</sup> During this period, the university published JPE and SPE examination papers and examiners' reports separately in annual pamphlets. The papers and reports for the years 1896-1900 were subsequently bound in two separate volumes. References to the examination papers and examiners'

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reports are drawn from copies of these pamphlets and volumes held in the Special and Rare Materials Collection, Morris Miller Library, University of Tasmania.

<sup>16</sup> Bridges was awarded one of the 81 passes in the subject. Forty-six students gained credits and 23 failed. The Examiner found that 'analysis and parsing were in a fair number of papers very well done, but the rest of the questions were, with several exceptions, disappointingly answered.'

<sup>17</sup> See for example the SPE 1893 result list. *Calendar of the University of Tasmania* 1894, Appendix.

<sup>18</sup> This information is drawn from the relevant *University Calendars*. Prose prescriptions included Goldsmith's *The Vicar of Wakefield* (1893) and a selection of his essays (1896), Macaulay's *Essay on Warren Hastings* (1894) and Lamb's *Tales from Shakespeare* (1900).

<sup>19</sup> See Horner's entry on Williams in the *ADB* 12: 508-9. Williams's Preface to his edition of Dryden's *The Hind and the Panther* (1900) begins:

This edition is intended for the use of the upper classes in schools and the junior students, especially of colonial universities, where the poem is frequently prescribed for examination. It is hoped that the notes will supply all the help in language, historical allusion, and theological controversy, necessary for an intelligent appreciation of the finest example of ratiocinative Verse in English literature ... [.] (v)

<sup>20</sup> Unless stated otherwise, information about the examinations and quotations from the examination papers are drawn from copies of the papers held in the Morris Miller Library, University of Tasmania.

<sup>21</sup> It has not been possible to locate the second-year 1894 examination papers for Honours awards.

<sup>22</sup> All these passages are highlighted in copies of the texts owned by Thomas Dunbabin when he studied English I and II in 1902 and 1903. Copies of these texts are now in my possession. Dunbabin was awarded his Art degree in 1905 and won a Rhodes scholarship. After graduating from Oxford, Dunbabin returned to Hobart and began a distinguished career in journalism. Thomas Dunbabin was first cousin to Robert Leslie Dunbabin, Professor of Classics at the University of Tasmania from 1917 to 1940. (Waters 365)

<sup>23</sup> The 1894 English II paper on English Authors asked candidates to provide quotations from Dryden and Pope.

<sup>24</sup> On the other hand, Williams's edition of *Ralph Roister Doister* (1901) contained only twenty-seven pages of introduction and notes in contrast to one hundred and twenty-two pages of the text. In his retirement, however, Williams published an edition of Green's *The Spleen* in which the text of thirty-one pages was exceeded by an introduction, notes, index to the notes and an appendix (fifty-nine pages), the extent of which almost doubled the text itself.

<sup>25</sup> One hundred and ten students passed the JPE (55% of candidates) and 34 passed the SPE (50% of candidates). The University Annual Report for 1900 indicates that 22 students sat for BA/BSc examinations and 16 passed. Three BA degrees and 3 MA degrees were conferred in December of that year. The report does not separate student numbers in Arts and Science.

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**3: POETRY IN PRIMARY SCHOOLS 1905 –1950 (i)**

### Poetry and the 'New Education'

In 1903, the Premier of Tasmania invited William Lewis Neale, an Inspector of Schools from South Australia, to report on primary education in the State. Robson reports that Neale had grown up 'with strong Methodist views and became a distinguished teacher and educationist and a passionate believer in the New Education' (253). Neale arrived in Tasmania in April 1904, interviewed senior officers and teachers, visited schools and then forwarded his *Report on the System of Primary Education in Tasmania* to the Minister for Education in August of that year. His *Report* provided a comprehensive analysis of the Department's current administration, curriculum and standards of teaching, and concluded that the existing system could 'only be regarded as very far from being even moderately efficient' (J&PP 6, 1904, Paper 49: 61).<sup>1</sup> Neale described the existing *Course of Instruction* as 'the type in vogue twenty years ago' and claimed that it bore no 'resemblance to modern curricula':

Judged according to currently accepted views of education, the Tasmanian syllabus is in error in its method of approaching some subjects, and is defective in not prescribing sufficient of the subjects of culture. Its main purpose is to give information, but it only provides part of the necessary information, and but one aspect of that part. It is not formative in the higher sense. (43)

He described prevailing teaching practices as appealing 'mostly to the memory of some form of expressing truth rather than to the truth itself', and not 'giving the child the chance of getting ideas', or 'the power of expressing himself in any way' (40).

As Selth (1970), Pirkis (1980) and Rodwell (1981) demonstrate, Neale's findings and recommendations relating to the curriculum and teaching methods were based on ideas promulgated by the 'New Education'. Neale believed that education based on these ideas was both a 'process of self-realization' and a preparation for all 'ethical, moral, social and civic relationships'. It was 'a preparation for *complete* living', developing 'every side of a child's nature', educating the emotions 'to become an impelling force for good conduct', as well as 'informing the mind to think properly' (8). Neale stressed the importance of encouraging students to express their ideas orally and in writing in order to promote knowledge and appreciation of the subject matter of lessons, to develop the imagination, and to 'generate power and interest in the children' (45).<sup>2</sup>

Neale's support for 'subjects of culture' is illustrated by his comments on the teaching of poetry. After visiting thirty-seven schools, he noted that in 'only a few instances could I get even fair answering to the easiest examination' in the subject, and commented further:

I found that, although prescribed on the programme of instruction, poetry had been much neglected. In the comparatively few cases where it had been taught, the methods used were not such as to develop power to understand and appreciate the subject matter; nor were the children interested. (50)

For Neale, poetry's 'truth' is its 'strongly formative' nature. Poetry is 'the literature of power, and may be a great stimulus to good motive and good conduct', as well as a valuable 'refining factor' in children's lives (41). He recommended that 'the curriculum should require the allotment of an hour a week to the special study of poetry and should prescribe the amount to be committed to memory by each class during the school year' (44). He stressed the importance of classroom discussion ('conversation') and noted that poetry, as well as other subjects such as science, history and geography, would be appropriate subjects for such an activity (43).

Neale was appointed Director of Education for Tasmania in 1905 and worked vigorously to implement curriculum and teaching reforms until his resignation in 1909 (Fig. 6). Initiatives he undertook that impacted directly on the teaching of poetry during these years were the introduction of a revised *Course of Instruction* and in-service education activities for teachers, the publication of monthly editions of a professional paper, the *Educational Record*, and the founding of the Teacher Training College under the leadership of a New Zealander, John Andrew Johnson.

### **The new *Course of Instruction***

Neale's *Course of Instruction* was introduced in stages and was not fully implemented until after his resignation and departure from the State. The first stage was the publication of the *Course of Instruction* for preparatory classes in August 1905 (*ER* August 1905, 50-1). The detailed instructions about the teaching of poetry included in the document indicate the importance Neale accorded this subject and his efforts to redress practices he had criticised in his 1904 *Report*. In particular, Neale stressed the need for children to understand the poetry they read and memorised:



Fig. 6. William L. Neale. Director of Education in Tasmania 1905-09.

During the year about 100 lines of suitable verse should be learned. Care should be taken not only to select such verse as can be understood by little children, but also, as far as possible, to choose poetry related to the subject-matter of other lessons, especially of those on nature study.

The words of the poetry should not be learned as mere words. By real things, by pictures, and by graphic description the subject-matter of the poetry should be presented to the children's minds; then, with skill, some of the more unusual phrases of the poem may be woven into the conversation until the children can use them; and only then – after all practicable means have been used “to picture out” the phrases – may the verses be committed to memory. It must not be forgotten that the music of words and the rhythm of verse have a singular charm for little children. Thus, the learning of suitable poetry is very easy for them; but the temptation to be satisfied with the mere repetition of words is constantly present. Hence, the need of making sure that the children have the vivid ideas of which the words are the symbol or the expression. (51)

The complete *Course of Instruction* for primary schools was published in 1911. In contrast to the 1887 course, the skills and activities of reading, writing, spelling and poetry were now integrated with composition, oral language and vocabulary and incorporated within the subject ‘English’. In the preparatory and first classes, poetry was to comprise nursery rhymes and short simple poems ‘correlated with nature lessons, etc, to be recited with suitable actions’ (6).<sup>3</sup> Teachers were urged to illustrate the poems with pictures or drawings on the blackboard. Children in these classes were to learn ‘about 25 lines per quarter’ and the recitation of one or two short poems was recommended ‘as a welcome break at the change of lessons’ (6). Pupils in the second and third classes were to read short ‘poetical selections correlated with nature and moral lessons’ and be able to recite about 25 lines per quarter with ‘clear and distinct’ enunciation and pronunciation (10). The *Course of Instruction* for the fourth class advised teachers to ensure that pupils learnt one poem of ‘about 30 lines per quarter’ and to give careful attention ‘to the enunciation of the pupils and to the thought-content of the poem’ (16). In fifth and sixth classes, the *Course* stated that about ‘150 lines of standard verse’ were to be recited ‘with special attention to pronunciation and enunciation’, and pupils were to ‘have a good knowledge of the thought-content of the poem and some knowledge of the author’ (20).

Although these prescriptions appeared to focus on poetry as an elocution exercise in enunciation and pronunciation, and as a memory test, or even as means of establishing orderly conduct at change of lessons, the 'Notes for Teachers' appended to the *Course* elaborated on the purpose and value of poetry lessons in schools and reflected the approaches Neale had promoted in 1904. While the 'memorizing and recitation of short poems' in preparatory classes would enhance progress 'in phrasing, emphasis, inflexion, and modulation' and no value could 'be attached to any recitation destitute of feeling, of clear expression, and of correct emphasis', children were to be taught to read and recite naturally and not with exaggerated emphasis and inflexion in imitation of the adult voice (26). Second, third and fourth classes were to be taught poems of 'literary merit' that 'have for their subject-matter the bright and hopeful phases of life'. Memorising was not to be undertaken until children were 'interested in the subject matter of the poem and made thoroughly conversant with the meaning of the language' (27). Further developments in understanding and appreciating poetry were expected in the senior primary grades where 'the reading lesson becomes the literature lesson' and the teacher's object was 'to get the thought-content and to cultivate the powers of appreciation'. At this stage there would be 'an evident awakening of the aesthetic sense' and the teacher would have an opportunity 'to cultivate that love of good literature which will be the scholar's most valuable possession in after life'. To achieve this, the teacher should have 'a sympathetic knowledge of the works of great writers – a knowledge that can readily draw from the storehouse of noble thoughts, and can bring forth the glow of pleasure by reference to the finely-expressed emotion' (28). Teachers were warned that methods of fostering children's appreciation should

never follow those dreary lessons known as "teaching the meaning of words." This exercise has often become, like analysis and parsing, an empty school routine; and it ought to be noted that the most difficult passages in the literature lessons are frequently those that require least "word" explanation. (28)

For the next two decades, teachers faced the challenge of meeting the Department's expectation that children should continue to recite poems effectively and at the same time demonstrate their understanding and aesthetic appreciation of them.

### **Educating the teachers**

Neale addressed the needs of a largely untrained and poorly educated teaching service by conducting regular Schools of Instruction for teachers and including professional literature in the monthly issues of the *Educational Record*. The first issue of this journal advised teachers that the Director was conducting a series of demonstrations 'in the methods of teaching that harmonize with the principles of the New Education' at the Central School in Hobart on alternate Friday evenings (*ER* March-April 1905, 8). At his first School of Instruction, held in October 1905, Neale spoke to over two hundred teachers about the 'ideals in education', a primary aim of which was 'the formation of character'. He discussed methods of teaching a range of subjects and singled out the teaching of poetry for particular attention. He outlined the principles of such teaching and provided 'practical illustrations of methods' based on these principles (*ER* October 1905, 76-7).

During 1906, Neale conducted further Schools of Instruction for teachers in Hobart and Launceston, at which he gave daily lectures and demonstration lessons in the teaching of reading, geography and poetry. W.C. Morris attended one of the Launceston sessions and many years later remembered Neale's lectures as 'inspiring' (29). At the Hobart School, J.A. Johnson, Principal of the newly established Teacher Training College, gave a daily lesson on the teaching of English 'including reading, poetry and composition', and conducted a voluntary evening class with teachers to study Tennyson's 'In Memoriam' (*ER* June 1906, 32). Through the winter months of that year, Johnson conducted evening meetings for teachers on the poetry of Tennyson and Browning (*ER* April 1906, 4). He also addressed the Royal Society of Tasmania on the topic 'The New Education'. One of his major themes in this address was the role of the teacher as an educationist whose task was 'the quickening of the intellect, the purifying of the emotions, and the guidance of the nobler will':

Children are to be taught to seek knowledge, to hunger and thirst after the unknown. The teacher is the guide who leads the way to the springs and groves of Parnassus. Character and the development of life become the goal of effort; not the inspector's percentage table and the examiner's coloured pencil. (*ER* September 1906, 80-1)

From its inception in March 1905, the *Educational Record* included regular references to poetry, often within the context of its place in the educational process,



and as an instrument of self-improvement for teachers. Such references included book reviews and articles reprinted from other professional journals, often drawn directly from the Victorian Education Department's *Education Gazette and Teachers' Aid*. Professor Dowden's article on the personality of the teacher in the October 1905 edition stressed the importance of literature for the personal development of both teachers and pupils and referred specifically to the poems of Wordsworth, Keats, Tennyson and Browning. Verse of 'spiritual quality', Dowden claimed, 'fortifies the imagination against vulgar and meretricious attractions' (83). The November edition of the *Educational Record* in the same year included in its notice of books for teachers an anthology of poetry titled *Laureata: A Book of Poetry for the Young*, with the injunction: 'Not only may the young read the poems with joy, but many a teacher, by studying them, might come to see the things invisible, and be more worthy to lead little children' (92). In 1906, a reviewer of Charles McMurry's *The Elements of General Method* stressed the author's claim that 'the chief aim of the teacher is to instil moral ideas through literature and history' and that the teacher must rely on the resources of others to realise this aim:

No matter what resources he may have in his own character, the teacher needs to employ moral forces that lie outside of himself, ideals toward which he struggles, and toward which he inspires and leads others. The very fact that he admires a man like Longfellow or Peter Couper will stir the children with like feelings [...]. He is but a guide, or, like Goldsmith's preacher, he allures to brighter worlds and leads the way. (*ER* May 1906, 22)

Neale approved of the approaches to teaching poetry outlined in the current *Memorandum on the Teaching of English in Scottish Primary Schools*, and printed extracts from the document in the *Education Record*. The *Memorandum* claimed that poetry's main function in the primary school was 'the cultivation of the emotions', and stressed that the poetry selected

must arouse no unworthy emotion; nor such potent emotions as terror, or even pity, to an overwhelming degree; nor can it properly appeal to instincts which have not yet arisen. But if an instinct is sure to arise and to need regulation, poetry can, in some measure, prepare for its advent by presenting its objects first in a pure and ideal form. (*ER* October 1907, 94)

By cultivating emotions in their pure and ideal forms, poetry becomes 'a powerful ally to morals' and enriches 'the soil of the virtues' (November 1907, 103).

Neale's belief in the moral power of poetry was complemented by the emphasis he placed on poetry's power to please. He recognised that if poetry was to 'kindle emotion', it should also 'give pleasure' by appealing 'much more to the imagination than to the intellect'. In June 1906, he published a brief extract from the Otago Education Board:

it is only through the imagination that we can take the standpoint of the poet, see with his eyes, breathe his atmosphere, yield ourselves wholly to his moods and thus feel what he has felt; and any method of study that fails to take account of this must fail to realise what is intended to be realised by the study of poetry. (33)

The next year Neale published the text of a paper presented at a conference of English teachers in Liverpool, England, titled 'English Poetry for Children from Six to Ten'. The writer's theme was the importance of children's enjoyment of poetry. Teachers would foster this attitude by choosing poetry that dealt with 'the facts of [children's] experiences' and appealed to 'what they *like*'. The writer discussed the appeal of rhythm ('the swing of spirited metre'), form, and 'sensuous' description, and above all of story, and urged teachers to consider the significance of fostering 'unmethodised intimacy' with poetry, '*playing with [poetry] [...]*, the saturation principle – the plentiful nourishing with ballad and song', as the 'true and solid foundation' of poetry appreciation. This writer's observations about the current methods of teaching poetry echoed Neale's comments in his 1905 *Course of Instruction*:

It is lamentable that under our system of examinations the first acquaintance of our children should so often be an anatomical one – that the first thing they are taught to do to a poem is to dissect it.<sup>4</sup>

The significance Neale accorded poetry within the curriculum contrasted starkly with its low status in nineteenth-century Tasmanian elementary schools. Neale's views about the teaching of poetry matched the principles of the New Education and also reflected his personal philosophy on the importance of education in life. He had referred to this philosophy in an address to a South Australian teachers' conference in 1904, titled 'The Spiritual Side of Education'. There he spoke of a 'subtle spiritual sense' which enabled people to 'see life whole and not in fragments', and of the importance of 'self-development and realization' beyond 'passing pleasure, the life of sport, the life that was alive while the sun shone'. The aim of the New Education was to see the 'whole' of life, 'knowing the grand and noble goal towards which we

tended'. Within such a context, the aim of the teacher was to develop imagination. He should 'teach children to gain that power whereby they could construct the relation of things and cast them in new moulds and shapes, [...] teach them to read with their higher and subtle senses what was in other men's minds' (21).

### **The legacy of Matthew Arnold**

Neale's ideas about seeing life 'whole' and giving children the 'power' to use their 'higher' senses indicate his familiarity with Matthew Arnold's writings on education, and suggest that many of his educational initiatives were based on Arnold's beliefs. Arnold's work was known within the State before this time, but rarely influenced education policy or practice when administrators' major aim was to improve basic literacy standards. Braddon and his fellow Commissioners, however, had quoted Arnold in their Royal Commission report of 1883 to support the provision of compulsory education and a broadening of the curriculum to include 'those simple but invaluable humanising acquirements without which the finest race in the world is but a race of splendid barbarians' (*HAJ* 45, 1883, Paper 70: xiii, xxiii).<sup>5</sup> And Inspector Lovell alluded to Arnold's view of the school as a 'civilising agent', rather than an 'instructing agent' and his belief in the need to 'exercise' children's 'faculties' when he wrote in his 1897 report:

Primary schools are not institutions for cramming children with "useful knowledge": their highest aim is, or should be, to help young people realise their faculties and to stimulate the desire for education. (*J&PP* 39, 1898, Paper 36: 13)

Arnold believed that poetry should be regarded as 'capable of higher uses, and called to higher destinies, than those which in general men have assigned to it hitherto', and that men 'have to turn to poetry to interpret life' and for consolation and sustenance ('Study of Poetry' 171). The status given to poetry in Neale's *Course of Instruction* and his prescriptions for its methods of teaching accord with Arnold's comments on the subject in his school reports of the 1870s and 80s. As early as 1874, Arnold was promoting poetry as literature, rather than mere recitation, recommending that children be taught 'the sense and allusions' of passages learnt so that their meaning can be 'appropriated and assimilated' ('General Report' 1874, 163-4).

Neale's promotion of subjects of culture for their 'formative' value echoed Arnold's concern over twenty years earlier that the schools he inspected favoured utilitarian values and ignored the 'formative character' of education. Arnold urged that the 'power of reading' should extend beyond the acquisition of basic literacy in order to achieve 'a higher purpose':

The reading lessons should be used not only to secure the bare power of reading – a most valuable power, yet capable, no doubt, like other good things, of being employed amiss later on in the pupil's life as well as of being employed for his good. Nor should they be used only to increase a child's stock of what is called information. They should be treated as in connexion with the good and sterling poetry learned for recitation, and should be made to contribute to the opening of the soul. ('General Report' 1878, 191)

In his 1880 Report, Arnold wrote that the 'acquisition of good poetry is a discipline which works deeper than any other discipline in our schools':

Good poetry does undoubtedly tend to form the soul and character; it tends to beget a love of beauty and of truth in alliance together, it suggests, however indirectly, high and noble principles of action, and it inspires the emotion so helpful in making principles operative. Hence its extreme importance to all of us; but in our elementary schools its importance seems to me to be at present quite extraordinary. ('General Report' 1880, 200-1) <sup>6</sup>

Arnold's Inspection Reports and his essay 'The Study of Poetry' provided the theoretical basis for Neale's approach to the teaching of poetry in schools. Several texts that Neale featured in *The Educational Record* demonstrated the application of these principles to the classroom. The most significant and influential of these was Percival C. Chubb's *The Teaching of English in the Elementary and Secondary School*, which Neale advertised in the first edition and many subsequent editions of the *Record* (*ER* March-April 1905, 1). Chubb's comments on the teaching of poetry, obviously based on Arnold's ideas, influenced senior officers' expectations about the subject in Tasmanian schools for many years, and his book was a recommended text on the subject as late as the early 1950s when I undertook teacher training at the University. Chubb recognised that the subject English had a higher purpose than language acquisition and the 'making of intelligent readers and capable writers and speakers'. The study of English fostered 'large culture values, and, above all [...] character values – for spiritual enlargement, clarification, and discipline of young hearts and minds and wills, which are to be touched to finer issues by its potent ministry' (ix). Chubb quoted Arnold's writings in support of the memorising and

‘declamation’ of poetry, not only as a means to teach the child ‘the best ways of speaking’, but to store the child’s mind ‘with the priceless treasure of the noblest thoughts and feelings that have been uttered by the race’ (48). He advised teachers to select poetry with care and in keeping with the age and experiences of the child, but also to ensure that it was ‘formative’ in Arnold’s sense. Such poetry

interprets to the child the simpler and more impressive facts of his own life, and those great abiding facts of nature and human life which come within the range of his notice and understanding [...] that celebrates the duties and privileges of early childhood: love and compassion for all gentle things [...], the domestic virtues, filial love and obedience, brotherly and sisterly love; respect for elders and teachers, goodwill and justice towards playmates and equals; veneration for the great and the common weal; and courage, grit. (81)

Chubb’s belief that poetry fostered children’s ‘imaginative and emotional’ faculties determined his approach to teaching the subject (83). Lyrical poetry required little more than ‘the right atmosphere and mood being given by the teacher’s reading and handling’ when ‘the song will carry its own inexhaustible meaning’ (91). Yet any kind of poetry relied on the teacher’s attempts ‘to make the poem tell, not upon comment and explanation, upon much talking and sentimental elaboration, but primarily upon vocal suggestion’ based on its reading (92). Such a reading must have the capacity to reach a child’s ‘emotional vitals’ (94).

Chubb’s recommended approaches to the teaching of poetry were mirrored in the 1911 *Course of Instruction* and in Neale’s instructions about the place of poetry in the curriculum. Poetry was to be regarded as a form of literature in its own right and with high educational value, and not simply as the medium for language study. Neale instructed that poetry should be given two thirty-minute lessons a week, the same allocation as that given to composition, dictation and spelling, and twice the time teachers were expected to devote to the teaching of grammar (*ER* July 1906, 45). He also included poetry as one of the aspects of the subject English that inspectors had to examine and report on during their annual visits to schools (‘Inspection Reports’).

Neale’s work in this area of the curriculum was continued by his successors William McCoy (1910–19) and George Brooks (1920–45).<sup>7</sup> They, and the teaching profession in general, acknowledged Neale’s contribution to the teaching of poetry on his death in 1914, when a tribute in the *Educational Record* noted that his ‘literary

instinct was keen and to many his talks on poetry will remain a pleasant memory' (January 1914, 112).

### **Methods of teaching poetry**

Articles on the teaching of poetry appeared regularly in the *Educational Record* until the mid-1920s. A small number of these focussed on the principles of poetry teaching and referred to Arnold's work. Two articles in 1910 praised Arnold for his concern to 'open the children's soul and imagination' and for valuing elementary schools 'more as centres of civilization and refining influence than as places for enabling the maximum number of children to spell and write and to do a given number of sums without mistake' (*ER* January 1910, 86). The August edition for that year reprinted passages from Arnold's writing on poetry and an extract from Hudson's 'The Meaning and Value of Poetry'. Hudson explained that Arnold's definition of poetry as a 'criticism of life' meant that poetry brings us 'into touch with vast ranges of thought and feeling beyond the narrow horizon of our individual world' (*ER* August 1910, 40). Balfour's 1914 presidential address to the English Association in Britain on 'The Uses of Poetry' was reprinted in 1915. His emphasis on the 'esthetic effect' of the music of poetry, the 'ductility' and 'telegraphic concentration' of poetic language and the richness of its 'illuminative imagination' foreshadowed increasing classroom emphasis on poetry as literature (*ER* June 1915, 97-9).

Most articles about poetry published in the *Educational Record* during these years, however, focussed on classroom practice, and these provide evidence of what poetry was taught and the methods of its teaching. B.S. Roach, a Head Master from South Australia, identified poets and poems popular with children at that time. These included Tennyson's 'Cradle Song' and 'Break, Break, Break', and 'stirring ballads' by Macaulay and Scott ('thoroughly enjoyed, especially by boys'). He noted that girls 'display a fondness for Tennyson's "May Queen,"' and commented that 'as it is a poem which is severely condemned by the critics, its girl admirers must, I suppose, show a lack of critical faculty'. Longfellow was the children's 'favourite' because this poet's 'simplicity and melodious verse [...] seems to meet the poetical needs of youth' (*ER* June 1907, 30-2). In 'The School Use of Poetry', the Victorian school inspector and editor of the *School Paper*, C.R. Long, considered the choice of poems

for classroom use, suggesting that the poems should represent the characteristics of 'true poetry' including 'a lofty moral quality, sincerity, emotional insight, imaginative force, emotional power, felicity of expression, and the charm of melodious words [...]' He believed that the poems selected should be those that the teachers appreciate and want to share, and that appeal to children:

poetry lessons should possess such a charm that every pupil will continue reading poetry when school days are over [...]. The lessons must not have associated with them memories of tedium and difficulties unsurmounted.

Long identified three values arising from the study of poetry: aesthetic (appreciation of the 'beautiful in nature and in art'); ethical ('power to stir the emotions and thus influence character'); and intellectual ('poetry of the imagination that develops the powers of the intellect') (*ER* October 1910, 73-5). His article is also of particular interest because it supports the need to include Australian verse in the classroom, an issue that is examined in more detail in the next chapter.

An extract from a paper delivered by Miss Lucas in New South Wales outlined her methods of teaching poetry. These included the daily reading and repetition of lines of verse or 'a talk upon the beauty of form or diction of some poem'. She wrote quotations on the blackboard at the beginning of each week which students read and understood, recited and discussed so that after some weeks they were able to recite Shakespeare's views on ambition, Longfellow's views on truth, and Shelley's thoughts about the sky-lark. Miss Lucas found

the best way to study a new poem is to use *the ear* of the child first. Read the poem aloud, if it be such a one as to permit it, divide it into sections. Read the first part uninterruptedly; then ask the children to visualize; to tell what they saw [...]. Proceed in like manner to the end of the poem. Get the images first. Then proceed to the details, meanings of new expressions, metre, figures of speech, etc, according to the age of the class. (*ER* September 1911, 54)

Another writer addressed the 'serious difficulties' many teachers experienced in the teaching of poetry, difficulties which resulted in children's 'loveless labour' and 'spiritless effort of mentally digesting something unpalatable'. The solution offered by this writer entailed moving beyond studying one class poem in a lesson, to the reading of a series of poems from a graded anthology 'containing the best English poems'. These were read to the class with 'all the dramatic effect of which [the teacher] is capable', following which children were permitted to read other poems

from the anthology and pick 'those posies which attract' for study and recitation. This writer's approach was 'an effort to inspire the elementary school child with a love of good literature, to make him sensitive to all its ennobling moral influences, to apply to the teaching of poetry the principle of learning through pleasure and not by organised drudgery' (*ER* July 1923, 130).

Some Tasmanian teachers worked enthusiastically to ensure that poetry's 'ennobling moral influences' impacted on their pupils. Neale no doubt would have approved of their emphasis on the 'formative' power of poetry, but may have wondered to what extent their pupils understood and appreciated the poetry taught. In 1907, an unnamed contributor celebrated the impact of stirring poetry on a listless class, and rejected the immediate demands of the examination for the more important 'fruit' such literature would provide in later life:

You are teaching the geography of South Africa, and mention the Boer War. You find a listless condition of inattention stealing over the class. Suddenly you launch out with a verse from Rudyard Kipling, or one of William Watson's polished sonnets. The change acts like the arousing effect of noble deeds. The lesson proceeds under the inspiration of the poet's words. "And the examination?" Think not of it. You have placed in the mind of some child – perhaps only one – a longing for something at present beyond its reach – a something which will bear abundant fruit in after life, and something which no examiner's percentage table can measure. (*ER* September 1907, 74)

Another local teacher described how he trained his class to be able to quote from memory 'suitable lines in prose and verse to demonstrate and drive home some lesson that will help to make a good citizen'. The writer showed how appropriate quotations from poems could support 'the righteousness of our cause in fighting Germany', encourage respect for 'God's creatures', foster demure behaviour among girls, help overcome temptations to steal, and encourage 'filial duties [...] too often forgotten'. The teacher had compiled a book of quotations and the work 'is frequently reproduced as homework [...] and parents take a great interest in it'. His use of extracts from poems by Brunton Stephens and A.B. Paterson to illustrate the wonders of the stars and the pleasures of life on the land is early evidence of Australian poetry being read in Tasmanian primary classrooms (*ER* October 1918, 139-40).



These articles illustrate the effective promulgation of Arnold's ideas among teachers who, however odd their classroom practices may appear from today's point of view, obviously embraced the concept of poetry's 'high destinies' and its powers of 'forming, sustaining and delighting' ('Study of Poetry' 171, 173). Such practices confirm, too, that the nineteenth-century emphasis on the didactic and morally uplifting function of poetry remained strong. The tension between this function of poetry and that to foster enjoyment and delight became a feature of the discourse about poetry teaching in the next decades, often perceived in those years as a tension between teaching poetry for understanding and encouraging students to appreciate poetry as art.

### **Teacher training**

Neale's mission to base teaching practice on the principles of New Education was supported by the principal of the Teacher Training College, J.A. Johnson, who initiated full-time teacher training in Tasmania in 1906 (Fig. 7). Johnson's writings on the New Education and educational psychology while principal of the Teachers' College demonstrate his interest in fostering children's emotional development and powers of imagination. Johnson noted that a significant feature of 'experimental pedagogy' was 'the abandonment of the old method of repression' and the encouragement of 'spontaneity' and the development of 'the child's powers of self-activity and originality' ('Recent Developments' 289). He wrote of the teacher rising 'above the drudgery of imparting information' in order to develop children's 'mental faculties', 'emotional capacities' and 'active powers', so creating 'the best conditions for the realisation of the possibilities of life' (*ER* September 1906, 79-80).<sup>8</sup> Johnson believed that children's understanding of these possibilities could be cultivated by imaginative contact with literature and art: 'the schoolmaster can train his pupil to see eye-to-eye with the poet and the painter', and when the pupil 'understands a poem or picture, he becomes akin with the constructive artist, and [...] traverses the same fields of imagination' (*ER* June 1912, 5).

Apart from his administrative duties as Principal, Johnson co-edited an anthology of prose and poetry for senior secondary students and lectured on literature and pedagogy with considerable impact for twenty-five years.<sup>9</sup> No documentary evidence exists of Johnson's lectures, but he had previously contributed over forty

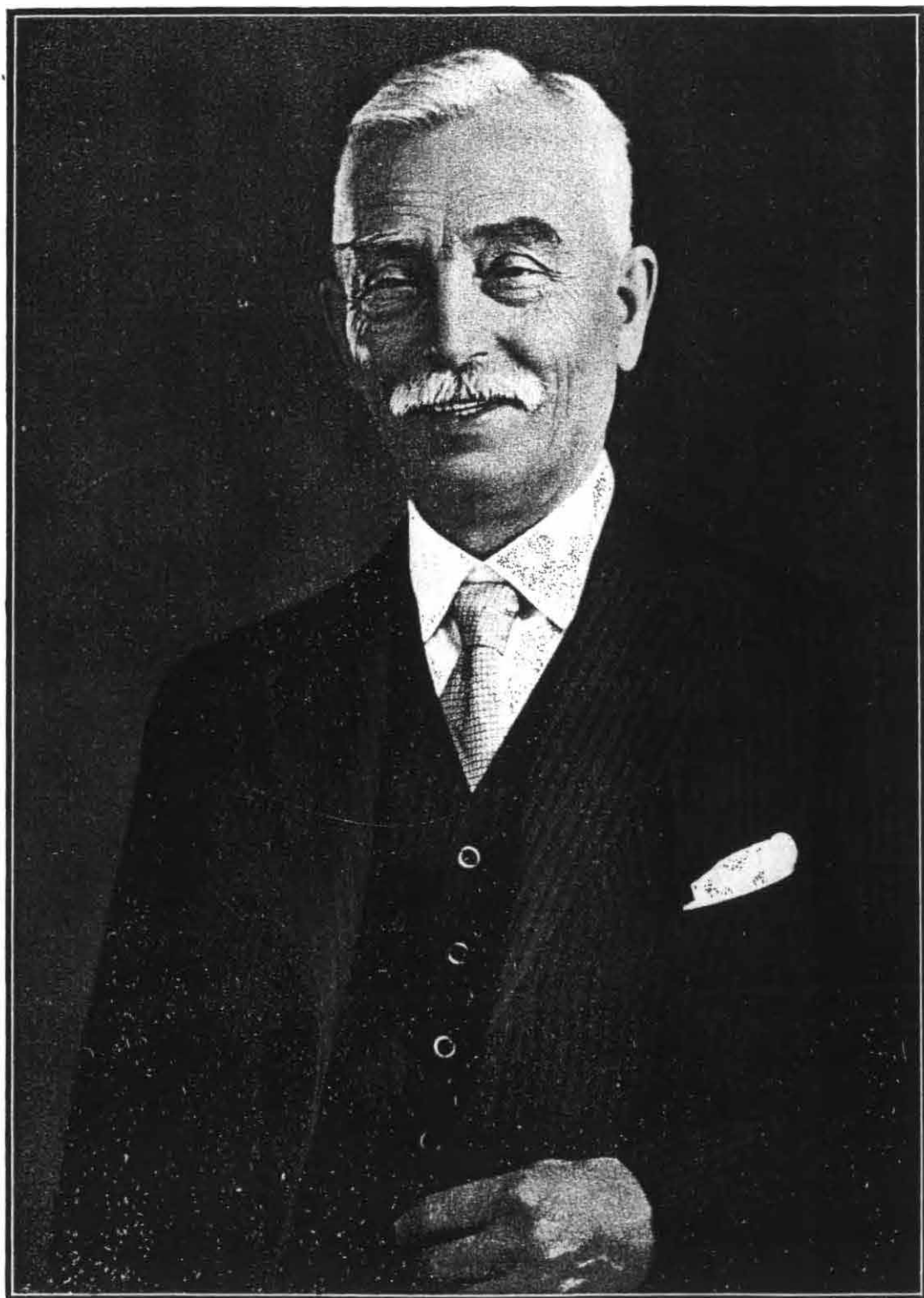


Fig. 7. John Andrew Johnson, MA (Otago).  
Foundation Principal of the Teachers' Training College, Hobart.

articles to the *New Zealand Journal of Education* between 1899 and 1905. Most of these addressed literary matters, including the poetry of Wordsworth, Byron, Shelley, Keats, Browning and Francis Thompson.<sup>10</sup> Others, such as 'New methods of education' and 'Child study', discussed educational principles and practice.<sup>11</sup> In his article 'The Teaching of English', Johnson wrote that to be a successful teacher of English 'one must be a reader of the best literature, a lover of poetry, a student of all the niceties of literary expression'. For Johnson a 'perfect sonnet should affect a teacher as a perfect piece of music' (125).

Johnson also encouraged students and colleagues to write poetry, and responded positively to their efforts. In 1907, he reviewed a collection of poems written by Sigismund Woolley, a teacher with the Tasmanian Education Department. Johnson found Woolley's book, *A Spray of Gum Leaves*, to be 'an earnest of something greater to come'. His review is a mixture of suggestion and support:

He has taken Nature for his inspiration – the voices of his native gum-forests, and of the surf-swept coast; but he ought also to familiarize his ear with the language and the rhythm of the masters of English song, from Chaucer to Wordsworth and Tennyson, and thus save his work from many phrases and lines that can in no sense of the word be called poetical [...]. In the "King of the Blue Gum Forest" one hears the ring of the woodman's axe, the whirl of the sawmills, and the "screaming and shrieking steel blade." Most of the poems are of this character, echoes of Tasmanian life and scenery. They should receive a hearty welcome from Tasmanian teachers, not only because of their intrinsic value, but because they are the work of a Tasmanian who seeks to bring honour to his country. (*ER* July 1907, 49)

Two poems by teacher trainees published in the *Educational Record* of August 1911 confirm that Johnson encouraged the writing of poetry among his students and fostered this by publishing students' work in the College journal *Tasmanian Trainee*. A poem by 'W.M.R.' titled 'Wind Voices' suggests familiarity with the ballad rhythms, diction and subject matter of Lawson and Paterson, particularly the latter's 'The Wind's Message':

Old bush memories come creeping, as the twilight shadows fall,  
When slowly from the sky the sunbeams pass,  
Come creeping slowly round me, but the dearest one of all  
Is the night wind singing softly in the grass.  
Can't you hear the rising, rising, hear the weird wind voices call?  
Can't you hear the gentle murmur sweet and low?  
'Tis the night wind singing softly in the tired tussock grass  
The song it sang a thousand years ago.

Lines from 'L.E.J.'s 'Moonlight on the Harbour' suggest the influence of one of Johnson's favourite poets, Tennyson. The poem begins with the exclamation 'O, mystery! O, glamour of the night!' and concludes:

The evening's lulled hushed sounds  
Pour in upon us as some haunting dream  
Of melody. Enrapt, we have no needs  
Beyond this tranced hour where joy abounds. (34)

While there is no evidence that teachers read and taught these two poems in their classrooms, some poetry by Tasmanian writers was first included in recommended reading for schools in the second decade of the century.

Johnson's literary leadership at the College was enhanced by the success of two of his students who won the Senior and Junior sections of the Victoria League's poetry competition in 1913. The competition was open to junior associates of the League in all countries of the Empire, who had to submit an original poem titled 'A Gallant Gentleman'. Winifred Rockwell (later the wife of Inspector A.L. Meston) won the senior prize and Enid Burnell (later Dame Enid Lyons) won the junior section. Both poets celebrated men of valour in a style and diction reminiscent of poets such as Kendall and Gordon. Their winning poems were published in the January 1914 *Record* (117).<sup>12</sup> Two years later the *Record* included a sympathetic review of another trainee student's book of verse, *Lads o' the Southern Cross*, written by 'Miss King' (June 1916, 107).

Ken Dallas was a trainee teacher at the College in 1921 and in later years paid tribute to Johnson's inspiring leadership and teaching. He records that Johnson taught English Literature to the trainee teachers enrolled in Arts at the university, and that every year 'he gave his special lecture, an impassioned interpretation of Browning's 'Andrea del Sarto' that all College students were required to attend, irrespective of the course they were following. 'Johnno taught by inspiration', Dallas recalls, 'any who ever heard Johnno's discourse on 'Andrea del Sarto' saw thereafter all poetry in a different light' ('Dallas Papers'). Enid Lyons wrote that Johnson 'lectured with a touch of genius', opening up 'new worlds of appreciation, especially in English Literature (38). Alison Alexander records the recollections of other students, confirming that Johnson 'aimed to make his students love and appreciate poetry

through inspiration: he would read a poem aloud and leave this to make an impact' (495).<sup>13</sup>

Johnson retired from the College at the end of 1931 and died twelve months later.

The Department's obituary included the following paragraph:

Amongst ex-students Mr Johnson's interest in English Literature, and his ability in lecturing on that subject, will always be recalled with very great pleasure. He had a vast store of incidents, humorous and otherwise, of the authors and their experiences, and this was continuously drawn upon on all occasions, so that the writers seemed to become personally known to the listeners. (*ER* January 1933)<sup>14</sup>

### **Continuity and change in the teaching of poetry**

Two articles published in the *Educational Record* in the second decade of the century provide evidence of contemporary approaches to the teaching of poetry, and illustrate both continuity and change in the nineteenth-century discourse on the subject. The first article was written by one of Johnson's former teacher trainees and could reflect Johnson's teaching on the subject and the influence of Neale's leadership. The young teacher considered the aims of teaching poetry and why 'the poetry lesson is often a failure'. Poetry is 'the key which unlocks the treasure-house of noble thought'. It appeals powerfully to the imagination of children and directs this imagination into 'healthy channels', nourishing it with 'healthy mental food'. Poetry strengthens and expands children's 'natural love for the harmonious and beautiful, and intensifies their aversion 'to the harsh and ugly'. It counteracts any stifling tendencies of home life and environment, illuminating and investing 'common objects with beauties not previously seen'. Finally, poetry is 'the most pleasant means of furnishing the child with new ideas and beautiful forms of expression'. It helps 'in the formation of a "good style" in writing, and therefore should be constantly given in conjunction with composition'. The writer then lists several reasons why 'the poetry lesson is often a failure'. Not all teachers are 'enthusiastic and appreciative students of poetry and literature' and so fail to promote interest and enthusiasm among students. Children's responses to poetry are deadened by undue stress on memorisation, word meanings and grammatical construction and allusions, and when little scope is provided for the child to respond imaginatively to the poetry read in class, either by illustration, dramatization, or lively story-telling and recitation. Sometimes the poetry is poorly

chosen and is too abstract and unrelated to children's experience (*ER* June 1915, 5-7).<sup>15</sup>

The American Lee Emerson Bassett's article 'The Teaching of Poetry in the Public Schools' was published in the *Record* in May 1914.<sup>16</sup> Bassett believed that schooling should extend beyond 'the utilitarian predisposition of our times' to educate 'the higher faculties of the student's nature':

Emphasis has been put upon mental discipline and acquisition of information, to the neglect of the imagination and emotions, upon the normal development and control of which much of the richness of the individual life depends. (170)

Contributing to this 'richness' of life are 'priceless possessions' such as charity, wonder, hope and 'reverence and delight in goodness and beauty', in which are found 'abundant life' and from which spring 'the supreme joy of living'. Enjoyment of art and poetry can generate such qualities, provided they are not taught with the aim of providing the 'same sort of training we expect from geography, history and physics'. Bassett was concerned that many teachers failed to inspire their students with a 'love' for poetry, either through lack of courage to 'stand strongly against the indifference of the time, and to teach poetry as poetry and an art, as imagination and sentiment', or because they themselves did not understand the function of poetry or were unable 'to impart its mood': 'Pegasus was blindfolded and put in the educational treadmill, and he is still doing duty in the prosaic round of grinding out grists of facts' (170).

Bassett noted that the historical, biographical and critical methods of teaching poetry at all levels of schooling resulted in students

being lead around [poetry] and by hearing it talked about; but they have little chance to hear it speak for itself or to know it at first hand and intimately. One might consider poetry historically, biographically, and critically until the crack of doom without knowing poetry, without being stirred by the high thought, the sentiment, the music of it, without, in the end, having experienced a single line. (171)

Approaches such as these miss the ultimate end of art: 'to educate, refine, and delight the spirit by bringing before it the truth of human experience expressed in a beautiful way, in lovely images, and in musical sounds' (171). The word 'spirit' was important for Bassett, not only as an expression of the soul of an individual, but because it

represented the special 'spell and mood' of a poem which should 'possess' the reader so that we are able to 'realise something of our finer and better selves, and to find new joy and meaning in life'. It was the responsibility of the teacher to direct students' taste for and love of poetry in order to experience these 'higher' values.

To achieve these values, Bassett gave first priority to reading poetry aloud. Poetry becomes 'a real and vital thing' when read aloud by a thoughtful and alert reader: 'a poem to be fully enjoyed must be audible to the outer ear, or must sing itself through the reader's mind as he follows its lines'. If students hear no poetry, they will enjoy no poetry. The 'painful lack of appreciation of poetry' among the young is because there is little reading aloud in classrooms by either students or teachers, and what reading is done is 'often cold, mechanical, indifferent'.

The study of poetry in our schools should be joyous work. The literature period should be the playtime of the imagination and the spirit. If poetry is presented with justice and enthusiasm, the hour devoted to it will be anticipated with eagerness and delight. This may be the case if much of the time is devoted to reading aloud by both pupils and teachers, not for technical skill or criticism, but for the pleasure to be derived from expressing and sharing the thought of fine prose and poetry. (171)

Bassett supported the memorisation of 'choice' poems, because by so doing we can really claim such poems or passages as 'our own' to be recalled in 'years of stress and need'. Teaching poetry is more than a 'perfunctory duty' undertaken to fulfil examination requirements; it is a means of 'employing the imagination' with what is 'wholesome' and beautiful, of 'refining' feelings, of 'enobling' minds, of 'strengthening' judgement, and adding to the joys of life. It provides 'a culture and strength of spirit that comes through vital contact with the best that has been thought and said in the world' (170-2).

Articles such as these maintained aspects of the nineteenth-century discourse on the importance of poetry in education, but the aims of its teaching now focussed more clearly on the individual child's development and enjoyment, rather than on the values and needs of society. Poetry is regarded as a resource (a 'storehouse' or 'treasure house') of good and noble thoughts providing a 'formative' power to improve moral conduct. Poetry's power continues to be described by images of growth and cultivation, but these images are no longer associated closely with

religion and the containment of sin and dissipation. Joseph Lancaster's 'storehouse of Divine truths' is now transmuted to Keats's 'realms of gold' that serve to engage and expand children's imaginative powers and aesthetic response. Arnold's ideas of poetry as interpreting life and opening the soul to beauty and 'truth' are maintained, but there is now less emphasis on poetry as consolation and sustenance, and more on its ability to foster enjoyment and creativity. The emphasis on children's active engagement with the meaning and beauty of poetry foreshadows the subsequent emphasis on children's personal response to poetry and literature in general, rather than 'received' opinion. Children are now given opportunities to respond creatively to their impressions of poetry. These approaches to the teaching of poetry are permeating the professional discourse of the subject, if not its practice in classrooms.

### **Conducting the poetry lesson**

The extent to which these ideas about the teaching of poetry were practised in Tasmanian elementary classrooms in the early decades of the twentieth century can be assessed, to some extent, by examining the poetry lesson outlines published in the *Educational Record* and the nature and outcomes of the school inspections reported annually during the period. Between 1910 and 1921 the *Record* published at least 28 articles outlining lesson plans for almost as many poems. The majority of these articles were reprinted from *The Victorian Education Gazette* and *Teachers' Aid*, but others were from a Western Australian teaching journal, from specific publications devoted to the teaching of English, and from educational journals published in Britain or North America. The articles targeted those teachers who had not benefited from formal training at the Training College, and were designed to convey methods of teaching poetry in accordance with the Department's expectations. The poems discussed were those from the approved class readers. Poets whose poems featured most frequently in these articles were Alfred Tennyson, Walter Scott, H.W. Longfellow, Byron and William Wordsworth.

These lesson plans were highly structured and often extremely detailed, particularly in relation to the meaning and content of the poems. Occasionally, the articles were written in the 'teacher's voice', suggesting the actual words, dialogue and conversation to be employed during the lesson, as in the article on Campbell's 'The Soldier's Dream': 'Now I am going to read you one of his simple poems and I want



you to suggest the title' (*ER* May 1915, 81). The notes on Wordsworth's 'The Daffodils' were the actual script for the teacher to use in the lesson: 'We are going to study and learn by heart a short and simple poem by one of England's great poets [...]' (*ER* June 1910, 6-7). The notes on Browning's 'How They Brought the Good News' and Longfellow's 'The Children's Hour' included questions for the teacher to direct to children, together with ideal answers (*ER* August 1911, 35-6; *ER* August 1913, 35-6); and the notes on the poem 'America' included an extensive three-page script of an imagined dialogue between teacher and class discussing the content and theme of the poem (*ER* August 1911, 37-9). All the articles provided lesson frameworks in three basic stages: an introduction to the poems; a presentation and study of the text of the poems; and expression or application activities arising from this presentation and study. These stages were based on principles of teaching methodology espoused by Herbart in his *Science of Education* (1892), a summary of which had been included in the 1909 November and December editions of the *Educational Record* (74-5; 79-80).

The introductory stage of the poetry lesson aimed to 'put the [child's] mind into such a condition that the germs to be given in the new lesson may become fruitful [...]' (*ER* November 1909, 75). These 'germs' established the mood necessary for the poem's 'best reception', where appropriate leading the children 'to project themselves in spirit into the necessary atmosphere' (*ER* April 1910, 129). Other recommended strategies included recalling known stories, events and circumstances related to the poem's subject matter, providing any historical, geographical or descriptive information necessary to understand the poem, and relevant information about the poet's life and circumstances. Such background knowledge would give 'zest' to the study of a poem, but was not to 'degenerate' into a separate lesson in itself (*ER* April 1913, 192), or detract from the 'beauty' of the poem (*ER* September 1914, 222). A suggested approach to the teaching of Addison's 'Ode to Creation' ignored this warning, the writer taking great pains to 'develop an apprehension of the majesty of the universe and the glory of the Creator' over at least one and a half lessons before the poem itself was introduced to the children (*ER* July 1915, 111-2).

The presentation stage of the poetry lesson began with the teacher reading the poem aloud. Eleven of the 28 lesson plans commented specifically on the quality and

importance of this reading, some suggesting that the students should listen to the teacher's rendition of the poem without access to the text. Students' energies at this time should be 'devoted to imagining the scenes and feeling the emotions expressed by the words they hear' (*ER* April 1910, 127). The lesson plan for Scott's 'The Pipes of Lucknow' included suggestions about how the teacher should read each stanza:

Stanza 3 (a) note of fear or horror; (b) raise the voice to express change to note of earnestness or solemnity. Stanza 4 (a) speak softly to express hopeless sorrow; (b) change to note of subdued excitement [...]. Stanza 7 expresses a crescendo of emotion from silent longing to a wild outburst of thankfulness [...]. (*ER* May 1911, 182)

The lesson plan for Byron's 'The Glory that was Greece' contained over four hundred words of detailed instructions to the teacher, dwelling on almost every line in each of the ten stanzas. Instructions for reading aloud stanza nine were:

Line 1. Emphasise "Pyrrhic" and in line 2 "phalanx," reading the line in a tone of indignant rebuke. Line 4. – Emphasise "nobler" and "manlier." Line 5. – Emphasise "letters" with pause, and "Cadmus." Line 6. – Read the question with indignant scorn; give emphasis to "think," and increase it with prolonged time and rising inflection on "slave." (*ER* August 1914, 212)

One writer believed that the teacher should recite the poem, rather than read it from the text, in order to provide an example of correct presentation, pronunciation, 'proper *tempo* [...]' and a better conception of the sense' (*ER* May 1912, 178).

Another believed that the teacher 'must first visualize the poem, by bringing together his ideas "gained by internal and external experience": If the lines do not stimulate his own imagination, he cannot expect to make the lesson live before the class' (*ER* October 1919, 139).

The lesson outlines devoted most space and detail to studying the text of the poem. Several writers recognised the challenge of 'working through a poem' to achieve understanding of content and theme 'without destroying its peculiar charm and special value' (*ER* April 1910, 127). One writer was 'haunted' by the thought that his detailed suggestions for studying the text of Wordsworth's 'The Daffodils' were 'too numerous for such a simple poem', acknowledging that they 'could defeat the main object of treating true literature in class, which is to create a liking for it and a desire to read more by the same author' (*ER* June 1910, 7). Another believed that the 'good teacher' could sometimes leave the poem alone after reading it to the class. Properly introduced and read aloud, the 'seed would have fallen upon good, well-prepared

soil, and might reasonably be expected to germinate and bear in due season' (*ER* July 1915, 112).

Although it was claimed that any approach to the teaching of literature was justified if it succeeded 'in producing or awakening in the pupils the emotion that possessed the poet' (*ER* May 1912, 180), the majority of lesson plans published throughout this period left no doubt in teachers' minds that classes should be inducted into the meaning of the poems in painstaking detail. Most plans provided an exposition of a poem's development of thought stanza by stanza, focussing on vocabulary, factual information, grammatical and figurative expressions, allusions and associations. While recognising that 'the reader, not the poem, is the exhaustible quantity', according to one writer it was important that children's comprehension be extended to the maximum:

[The teacher] must press the analysis to the limits of class capacity, and may, then, supplement according to the needs of the poem or the interests and ambition of the class. The manner in which the author's thought unfolds itself is the key to the method and manner of analysis. (*ER* April 1912, 160)

This preoccupation with ensuring that children understood the 'thought content' of a poem resulted in less attention being given to their aesthetic response. One commentator observed that some teachers believed their task had been accomplished by 'giving their pupils an intelligent grasp of the ideas of a poem, and securing an accurate rendition of it', without developing an appreciation of the poem's artistry and worth. Such an appreciation of the poem came from 'the perception of such things as the exquisite choice of words, the harmony of sound and rhythm with the idea, and the beauty and appropriateness of simile, metaphor and descriptive epithet' (*ER* April 1910, 127-8). When considering Longfellow's 'The Slave's Dream', questions were directed to parts of the poem requiring 'the "mind's ear"' rather than 'the "mind's eye"', the effect of rhyming words, the 'beautiful or striking comparisons' and verses which made "'pictures'" (*ER* July 1921, 107). A favoured activity was to ask children to listen to the poem read with eyes closed, encouraging them 'to form a mental picture' of the whole poem (*ER* May 1920, 82):

Visualising the scenes – seeing the pictures – is a means of stimulating the pupil's comprehension of the thought, and of cultivating the imagination, and, when successful, yields enjoyment. (*ER* June 1910)

Writers noted the value of seeking children's personal responses to the descriptive or narrative content of the poem and relating the poem's theme to the children's experience (*ER* June 1912, 9). The question suggested in a lesson on 'The Daffodils' was typical of this approach: 'Can you give an illustration from your own experience of the fact that gazing at and thinking about what is beautiful enables us to store up happiness?' (*ER* June 1910, 6). Two writers stressed the importance of children 'feeling the truth of the spiritual application' of the poem (*ER* April 1910, 128; March 1911, 151); and the notes on 'Regulus before the Roman Senate' made a point of celebrating 'heroic moral courage' and the 'ideal' (*ER* April 1913, 193). Discussion of poems could be 'a most valuable occasion to impart incidentally, but most significantly, that fund of moral guidance which, once set in the currents of their soul, becomes, through habitual recall, character'. This was 'the teacher's opportunity to "point a moral," to link facts of the curriculum with the issues of life in conduct' (*ER* June 1912, 10). Bowen, in an article reprinted from the *London Educational Review*, however, warned against making children 'priggish and self-righteous' by encouraging them to apply ethical ideas to their own lives and the lives of others: 'The attitude of fault-finder and judge is not a healthy one for a little child' (*ER* May 1913, 208).

Most of the poetry lesson plans concluded by considering Herbart's final methodological steps of generalisation and application. Writers offered suggestions for activity work designed to reinforce and apply an understanding of the poems' themes. These ranged from reproductive activities to creative work. Written exercises included retelling narrative events, recalling descriptions, paraphrasing specific stanzas of the poem and applying thematic material to children's personal experiences. Suggested drama and illustration activities covered similar ground. Investigative activities included researching and preparing biographies of the poet and the historical background of relevant poems. Several writers suggested extending children's understanding of a poem by introducing the children to new works with similar themes 'so creating a desire to drink more deeply [...] of the finest of our English literature' (*ER* May 1920, 81).

The most common form of recommended application activity was the oral reading, memorisation and recitation of the poems. Reading aloud was a means of gauging

students' understanding of, and response to, the passage, and provided the opportunity to focus on the skills of enunciation and pronunciation (*ER* April 1910, 127). Teachers were warned that their own oral reading of the poem provided an important model for children, whose recitation would not only adopt 'the virtues of the teacher's reading', but also imitate its faults (*ER* June 1910, 8). Memorising of poetry was not 'as is often thought, the end to be sought in teaching literature', but rather 'a means of deepening the impression or of preparation for a later recall and review' (*ER* May 1912, 179). Several writers were sceptical of the accepted methods of elocution at that time, one explaining that such methods denied pupils the opportunity to demonstrate their personal 'grasp of the thought and perception of the mood' of the poem (*ER* March 1911, 152). Another commented on the common practice of including prepared poetry recitations in end-of-year school functions:

If the recitations were an honest, legitimate presentation of the reading as taught in the school, there would be no objection to it; but, in most cases, it is anything but this. Special teachers are called in to "coach" the students, and the result is far from satisfactory. A few lessons can seldom make a reader, and where that plan partially succeeds, so much greater is the hypocrisy [...]. There may be many who train a class to read in concert from imitation. The results of such training are worse than baneful, leading only to inane, affected expression. (*ER* May 1911, 182-3)

The poetry lesson plans published in the *Record* imposed structure and method on Neale's earlier expectation that children should be taught to understand and appreciate the lines of poetry they had previously simply memorised. Understanding and appreciation would heighten children's imaginative powers and refine their feelings and emotions. These qualities were now seen to be as important as any moral guidance provided by the themes of the poetry studied. The nineteenth-century images of growth and cultivation continued to convey messages about the values of teaching poetry, but they applied to 'germinating' and 'cultivating' the imagination and emotional development of children rather than their moral goodness. The spirit in which children responded to poetry, their zestful and enthusiastic reception of poetry, their enjoyment of specific works and desire to explore further literary works measured the vigour and rate of this growth.

The nature of the lesson material provided in the *Record* indicated, however, a dichotomy between understanding the poetry's content and appreciating its particular

qualities. Several writers of the notes recognised that the depth in which understanding was pursued could counteract any positive response to the poetry studied, and undermine the aim of encouraging children to read more widely in the field. Bassett wondered who would be able to enjoy a poem 'after the vicissitudes of so long a journey' establishing understanding of background and text of the work (*ER* May 1914, 171). Arnold's 'higher purposes' and the 'formative' power accorded poetry could well be negated in the long and exhausting search for the literal meaning of the poem.

The emphasis on linguistic meaning and figurative language in the analysis of the poetry in many of these lesson notes obviously served as detailed 'cribs' for teachers, and reflected the contemporary emphasis in secondary and tertiary study on a linguistic approach to the study of literary works. The notes were useful guides to the language and meaning of poems, but provided little assistance in the area of literary appreciation. The notes served, too, to authenticate a particular method of teaching poetry, a method that continued to be espoused by the University's Faculty of Education in the second half of the twentieth century. In one sense, this methodology *per se* triumphed over the subject of poetry, and teachers were preoccupied with a structured approach to its teaching instead of any sense of 'mission' about its 'formative' power. The 'spiritual' values of poetry were in danger of being lost in the ordained liturgy of its teaching.

### **School inspectors and the teaching of poetry**

School inspectors were Neale's agents for the implementation of the ideals of New Education. Their comments and annual reports indicate the extent to which they addressed this mission and their assessments of its success in elementary classrooms. Neale introduced revised procedures for school inspections in 1905. Inspectors were to conduct annual examinations of pupils in all schools in the subjects prescribed in the *Course of Instruction*, but also 'deal with the higher aspects of school life' (*ER* June 1905, 27). These aspects included such facets of the New Education as 'apperception', the 'correlation of subjects' and the ability of teachers to 'arouse interest, stimulate enquiry, and promote the mental activity of children' (*ER* July 1906, 45). Inspectors were to form judgements about methods of instruction based on such questions as:

Are the children being trained *to observe, to think, and to tell* for themselves? Do they take an active part in the work of instruction, or are they passive recipients of what the teacher tells them? Are they being trained to acquire knowledge for themselves? Is the instruction suited to the age and experience of the pupils? Is a taste for reading suitable literature [...] being fostered? (ER March 1910, 111)

Specific instructions relating to the examination of poetry during these inspections were published in 1909:

Children in the Preparatory Class and First Class may be expected to repeat the poetry simultaneously as well as individually. In all classes it is expected that the children will be taught to *understand and feel the subject-matter* before committing the poem to memory. The inspectors will give special attention to this requirement.

The amount to be committed to memory –

*Preparatory Class.* – Not less than twenty-four lines per quarter.

*Class I.* – Not less than thirty-six lines per quarter.

*Class II.* – Not less than fifty lines per quarter.

*Class III.* – Not less than seventy-five lines per quarter.

*Classes IV., V., and VI.* – Not less than one hundred lines per quarter.

(ER April 1909, 127; emphasis added in the second sentence.)

Notes on ‘The Learning of Poetry’ from the New South Wales *Course of Instruction* for primary schools were printed in the *Record* to remind teachers of the nature of the poetry to be memorised and the purpose of this activity:

It is neither necessary or desirable that the attention of the class should be confined to one lengthy poem. The poetry learned should rather comprise short poems, short selections that are complete in themselves, single stanzas, and also detached couplets or single lines which may be worth learning on account of their literary beauty, or their applicability to something else learned. In selecting poetry for each class, its suitability, both in the range of ideas expressed and the language used, should be kept in view, so that it may be appreciated. In the earliest stages pupils are attracted by rhythmical lines before they fully understand their beauty or literary merit. (ER May 1916, 92)

By listening to individual and group recitations and questioning the class about the poetry read and memorised, inspectors assessed the standard of poetry teaching in each class and recorded a brief comment on the official inspection report form for each school. Many of these assessments were one- or two-word comments and appeared to relate almost entirely to the quality of pupils’ recitations. Those for the poetry teaching at Deloraine school in August 1905, for example, ranged from ‘Moderate’ in the preparatory and first class to ‘Very fair’ in the senior classes; assessments for Lindisfarne school in 1909 were consistently ‘Good’ or ‘Very Good’

across all grades ('Inspection Reports'). During the second decade, the Department published a selection of inspectors' reports on un-named individual schools in the *Record*, no doubt to focus teachers' attention on inspection requirements. These reports included slightly more extensive comments on the poetry teaching at the particular schools.

All the individual school reports published in 1911 and 1912 commented specifically on children's ability to recite the poems from memory, and while over half of these referred to children's understanding of the subject matter of the poetry, they rarely referred to children's appreciation of the poems. Inspector Brockett wrote that the poetry in one of his schools was 'Well-recited and memorised', and 'generally well understood' (*ER* June 1911, 2). At another school, Inspector Davis was impressed with the 'good selection of pieces' that were 'very well memorised and said with expression'. He noted that the 'word meanings' were understood, but that the 'deeper lessons' in some poems had been 'overlooked' (*ER* September 1911, 50). Inspector Garrett was satisfied with the standard of recitation in one of his schools, but recommended a better selection of poems in the junior classes, more closely correlated to nature-study lessons (*ER* September 1912, 51).

Five years later, individual school reports published in the *Record* focussed less on understanding and more on the quality of children's recitation. In his report for one school, Inspector Brockett recorded that poetry was well memorised in junior classes, but the recitation was 'somewhat lacking in brightness' (*ER* July 1916, 116). On a subsequent occasion, Inspector Crawford noted the 'nice' recitation in grades 1 and 2 and the well memorised and understood poetry in senior classes which could, however, have been 'more deliberate and forceful' in recitation (*ER* September 1916, 141). In another school that year, the poetry was 'well memorised, and often tastefully recited', but sometimes spoilt by being too deliberate' (*ER* October 1916, 154). Three reports of poetry examined in separate schools during 1917 had a similar focus:

Poetry – I. and VI., good; IV. and V., very fair; in both infant rooms, very pleasing. In some of the other classes recitation is spoilt by exaggerated emphasis and undue straining after effect. (*ER* July 1917, 107)



Poetry – Selected pupils gave very good recitations. Some duller students showed the need for more frequent practice. (*ER* December 1917, 162)

Poetry – Unusually well prepared in classes IV., V., and VI., with much taste shown in recitation. Very good. In classes II. and III. selected children recited very well. Memorising, generally, was only fair. Classes I and Preparatory were good. (*ER* December 1917, 163)

These individual school reports offered only limited evidence of the implementation of Neale's more comprehensive approach to the teaching of poetry for its 'formative power' and the 'higher' purposes of appreciation. Such matters, however, featured more prominently in inspectors' district reports submitted to the Director and tabled in parliament each year. For these audiences, no doubt inspectors were conscious of the need to present their findings within the context of the current educational policy promoted by their Director. Their early reports during this period therefore commented on schools' response to Neale's new approaches to education.

Inspector Lovell described these new approaches as 'a process of transition from the old order to the new', commenting that despite the 'disturbance of established ways and accepted traditions' many teachers were willing 'to improve their methods and to work for the best ideals [...] in the direction of the "New Education"' (*ER* December 1906, 118-9). Inspector Garrett wrote of a 'general awakening' and 'the dawn of a new day' in the State's education which he believed augured well for the future, despite the fact that there was 'still much groping in the twilight' because 'the new order is only dimly understood' and the consequent 'slow-coach pace at which many of the teachers drive their teams afield' (*ER* January 1907, 125). Inspector Brockett expressed similar reserved optimism:

The Schools of Instruction held at Hobart and Launceston have done much to improve methods, and to suggest a broader educational outlook. In all cases teachers are not teachable, but in some instances the difference in the spirit of the schools, as a direct consequence of these gatherings, has been most apparent, and much of the work lifted to a distinctly higher plane. There is still a great deal of aimless meandering round the desks, and much talking that is mistaken for teaching; but I can record progress. (*J&PP* 57, 1907. Paper 10: 12)

Emphasis on the memorisation and recitation of poetry continued, but there was a developing awareness of the importance of understanding and appreciating such

poetry. Thus, although Inspector Lovell believed the amount of poetry memorised was inadequate and that pupils 'might fairly be expected to learn a moderate portion of poetry at home every evening' (*ER* December 1906, 118), he acknowledged that teachers were placing more emphasis on an understanding of the poetry, and stressed that 'the ideal aim of the poetry lesson [...] is to lead the children to discover and interpret the meaning for themselves, and especially to reach that higher stage of understanding and insight which is known as "appreciation"' (118). Inspector Garrett noted the prevalence of poems being 'tortured to give up their stories' and their 'outward form' being 'dissected in the interest of parsing and analysis so that the 'spirit' of the works 'vanished into thin air' (*ER* March 1912, 141):

The piecemeal analysis and dissection on the blackboard, with the elaborate red and blue italic stressings, does not leave much of the poet's spirit for the poor children to imbibe. (*ER* March 1914, 139)

Inspector Brockett expressed similar concerns. He commended the admirable recitation of poetry that was well memorised and understood in his schools, but noted that children often failed to 'see the poem as a whole' and 'visualise the scenes'. He reported instances where the teachers themselves did 'not appreciate the spirit of the poem nor comprehend its language' (*ER* March 1916, 54); or where 'old-time methods' meant there was 'no attempt to make the children see the poem as a whole, or with the proper background'. In such circumstances, the poetry lessons often became 'a mere elocutionary exercise, in some cases a prelude to the competitions which are held in various centres each year' (*ER* March 1917, 54).

Inspector Wright, however, could report an 'advance of a decided nature [...] both in the selection of the poems and in their memorization'. Some of his reports were couched very much in the language of Arnold's criticism and focussed on the methods of teaching poetry and the aims of such teaching:

In a few schools the subject-matter is discussed with eagerness, because interest and anticipation have been aroused in the pupils' minds as a result of a proper method of treatment. More might be done to make the children form mental pictures of scenes and events, and so see the meaning of the pieces. An improvement in clearness of expression would be accomplished if the meaning of the whole passage and of the words and allusions contained in it are clearly understood before the pieces are memorised. A valuable aid to memorisation will be found in transcribing the selected passage. Poetry properly taught should quicken the imagination, stir the

emotions, and impart ideals of life. It should influence conduct and form character [...]. (ER March 1916, 55-56)

Arnold's influence was obvious in Wright's 'quoted observations' in one of his annual reports to remind teachers of the significance of poetry within children's learning programs:

Poetry possesses value for aesthetic, ethical and intellectual training; it should be chosen for school purposes with much circumspection; it should be taught with loving enthusiasm as a precious thing; it should be memorised so as to remain a lifelong possession to delight, to stimulate, and to console; and it should be recited so as to yield pleasure to others. (ER March 1915, 53)

Wright and his colleagues believed that when children understood poems and responded sensitively to their themes, memorisation and recitation of poems would be meaningful. It was important, therefore, that poems were chosen wisely and that care was taken 'to infuse spirit, vim and realism in the recitation in order that the meaning of the poem may be felt' (ER March 1919, 54). Senior Inspector Heritage's report for 1916 mentioned schools 'where the poetry lesson is so vivid, so interesting, so full of fine feeling, that the children fairly revel in their recitations' (ER March 1917, 53). This comment echoed Matthew Arnold's claim that if a child could 'be brought to *throw himself into* a piece of poetry' it would result in 'a lively pleasure' ('General Report' 1882, 228-29). The wise choice of poems to be memorised was so that they would 'be a treasure to the learners in the years to come' (ER March 1917, 56). This last point was particularly important to Inspector Fletcher:

why poems learnt during previous years should be allowed to be totally forgotten I fail to understand. If a poem be memorised and then readily forgotten, what is its educational value? If it were worth learning, and that effort has been attended with success, such should not be allowed to be wasted. Occasional revision will retain the poem ever in the memory. (ER April 1920, 67)

Inspector Wright agreed, noting that poems learnt three months before the inspection could not be recalled, and affirming that if a poem is worth learning, 'steps should be taken to make it a part of the child's mental furnishing' (ER, April 1921, 67).

Inspectors became increasingly concerned about the choice of poems to be read, memorised and recited in classrooms. Inspector Fletcher believed the poems chosen should be 'well within the range of the pupils', and also 'should have a direct appeal

for the teacher, for it becomes increasingly difficult to teach a piece unless it is first loved' (*ER* March 1919, 56). These two reasons for choosing poems posed further problems, however. Inspector Wright expressed concern that many teachers in his schools chose poems 'because of the ease with which they can be memorised', rather than for their 'intrinsic merit' (*ER* April 1920, 64); and Inspector Brockett complained that many young teachers (ex-students of the Training College) failed 'to realise that the poetry which may appeal to an adult has but little interest to children in primary schools' (*ER* April 1920, 63). As early as 1912, Brockett had registered concern about this issue:

there is a great need for more care and judgement in the selection of passages to be learnt by heart. I very much doubt whether but the most advanced children in primary schools are able to appreciate in any way Shakespeare's plays, and a little reflection will show how unsuitable such a poem as "The Psalm of Life" is for young children. In the attempt to correlate history, nature-study, etc, it is not uncommon to find poetry memorised that is not worth the effort [...]. (*J&PP* 67, 1912, Paper 3: 13)

It would be a fortunate teacher who was able to satisfy the range of requirements for teaching poetry, as cited by inspectors. Accessibility of meaning and theme and relevance to children's interests had to be balanced against the need to familiarise children with the 'beautiful' and 'noble' thoughts of poems that should be a 'lifelong possession and treasure' (*ER* June 1923, 109). Brockett wanted the poems chosen to not only have 'literary merit', but also be 'the gems of English poetry', reminding teachers that they 'should be content with giving [children] nothing less than the best' (*J&PP* 69, 1913, Paper 4: 18). Fletcher expected that poems memorised should be 'well within pupils' grasp' and 'incite their interest', and pointed out that much Australian verse 'has qualities well suited to the minds of our children' (*ER* June 1923, 113). These were heavy demands on teachers, the majority of whom had experienced no formal teacher training in the early decades of the century. Many of these teachers would have been familiar only with the poetry in the class readers and a method of teaching poetry that they had experienced as pupils in primary schools. The reading texts prescribed by the Department in the first decades of the twentieth century, however, did provide teachers access to a greater range and variety of poetry than had been available previously.

### Poets and poems taught in primary schools 1900 – 1925

The *Royal Readers* remained the prescribed readers for primary schools until 1906. Although inspectors continued to acknowledge their value as aids to activities such as ‘Composition’, they also wrote of the ‘dullness and silliness’ of much of their contents (*J&PP* 41, 1899, Paper 13: 13; and *J&PP* 43, 1900, Paper 12: 12). Inspector Garrett described the readers as ‘deficient in point of interest’ and noted the continuing ‘quest [for] the perfect reading book’ (*J&PP* 49, 1903, Paper 21: 11). In his 1904 *Report*, Neale identified significant weaknesses in reading, including the fact that children in the lower classes were able to recite the reading books by heart, so often had they read them. He recommended the use of the Victorian Education Department’s *School Papers* as ‘the best and cheapest form of school reading books’, edited by a ‘highly-trained educationist and literary man’, Inspector Charles Richard Long (45, 17).

The Victorian *School Papers* became the prescribed reading material for the third, fourth, fifth and sixth classes in Tasmanian primary schools from 1906, together with the *Tasmanian History Readers*. At the same time, the *Tasmanian Primers* and *Reading Books I* and *II* were introduced for infant and lower primary classes. Several years prior to this, however, the public-spirited Tasmanian State Librarian, Alfred J. Taylor, edited and published his *Tasmanian School Journal* ‘with the object of imparting information that may be useful and instructive’ to children in senior primary classes (*TSJ* Oct. 1901, 2). The journal was issued monthly from October 1901 to September 1903 and comprised informative articles, fiction and poetry. The Minister for Education ‘gladly’ recommended its circulation to schools and hoped that all children in fifth and sixth classes ‘to whom the Journal should prove interesting, will subscribe the penny per month, which will procure a copy of it’ (*TSJ* Oct. 1901, 2). It appears that copies of the journal were distributed widely. The Battery Point Model School purchased one hundred copies of each issue, and pupils at Mole Creek School read the journal regularly, one pupil, in a letter to Taylor, stating ‘We have read the Royal Readers so often that we are glad of the fresh and interesting things in your paper’ (*TSJ* Sept. 1903, 171; Nov. 1901, 18). The journal was not compulsory reading for Tasmanian schools, but its contents are informative because they reflect a prominent citizen’s ideas about the nature and function of poetry in senior primary classrooms.

### ***The Tasmanian School Journal***

The marked contrast between the nature and purpose of much of the prose and poetry in the journal indicates that poetry continued to be privileged with those special moral and 'formative' qualities it held in nineteenth-century school readers. The twenty-four issues of the journal contained prose articles on topics ranging from Tasmanian history, geography and Aborigines, to agriculture, botany, cookery, health, citizenship, physiology, and geology.<sup>17</sup> Taylor wrote most of these articles, although H.J. Colbourne (the Tasmanian Government Agricultural Chemist) regularly contributed specialist notes on agriculture and W.G. Wardrop wrote an occasional article on related topics such as 'rain' and 'mosquitoes'. The Clerk of the Legislative Council (E.C. Nowell) and Herman Ritz (Lecturer in Modern Languages at the University) were frequent contributors, the former writing on correct English and the latter on the history of English literature. The current and locally relevant material in many of these articles contrasted with much of the dated prose material in the *Royal Readers* that bore no relation to the Tasmanian environment and the daily lives of pupils.

The themes and style of the 36 poems in the journal, however, were more closely allied to those of the nineteenth-century school readers, and also reflected the editor's perspectives and taste.<sup>18</sup> Table 16 lists the poets and their poems included in the issues of the journal. Fourteen of the poems were anonymous or unattributed, some being drawn from contemporary journals such as *Young Soldier*, the *Philadelphia Inquirer* and *Woman's World*. None of the anonymous poems had appeared in earlier school readers examined in chapter 1, but, as their titles indicate, they conveyed similar moral themes: 'A Conceited Little Dog', 'Grumble Tone', 'Where's Mother?', 'Awake! Awake!', 'Self Examination', 'Table Manners in Rhyme', 'A Little Bird Tells', 'Climbing the Hill', 'A Real Hero', 'Queries', 'Do Your Best', 'Isn't He Queer?', 'Trifles', and 'How to be Happy'. The six established poets represented in the journal were Felicia Hemans ('Casabianca'), Oliver Wendell Holmes ('Sun and Shadow'), Leigh Hunt ('Abou Ben Adhem'), H.W. Longfellow ('A Christmas Carol' and 'Children'), J.R. Lowell ('They are slaves') and J.G. Whittier ('A Christmas Message' and 'Disarmament'). 'Casabianca' and 'Abou Ben Adhem' were the only two poems that had featured in previous school readers. The

Tasmanian poets included in the journal were Alfred Taylor (the editor) with his two poems 'Sentinel Jim's Dog' and 'The Earthquake', J. Woodcock Graves (an extract from his poem 'Truganini') and 'Wild Cherry' from Woodbury whose poem was titled 'Influence'.

Taylor's choice of poems reflected an earlier nineteenth-century view of poetry as an instrument for moral instruction. Almost all the poems fitted the category of 'improving verse' and conveyed messages about personal behaviour and character. Their focus on qualities such as good manners, fortitude, consideration for others, strength of mind in the face of temptation, kindness to animals and respect for mothers was similar to the verse in the BFSS *Daily Lesson Books* and the *Irish* and *Royal Readers*. The theme of 'A Conceited Little Dog' corresponded with earlier poems such as 'Against Pride in Clothes' (3<sup>rd</sup> IR, 1851) and Newton's 'The Kite or Pride Must have a Fall' (3<sup>rd</sup> IR, 1878). 'Sentinel Jim's Dog' continued the traditional theme of the loyalty of animals featured in Campbell's popular poem 'The Harper and his Dog'. The poems 'Where's Mother?' and 'Remembered Best of All' celebrated qualities of motherhood which had featured in all previous school readers. Other poems such as 'Isn't he Queer?' and 'Now and Then' reflected established themes of application to work and the dangers of procrastination, conveyed previously in poems such as 'A Minute' and 'The Two Gardens' from the *Third Irish Reader* (1851).<sup>19</sup>

Poems such as 'Grumble Tone', 'Self Examination', 'Do Your Best', 'How to be Happy' and 'The Higher Life' maintained traditional themes of personal behaviour and strength of character. Such themes were so important for Taylor that he reinforced the didacticism of Oliver Wendell Holmes's poem 'Sun and Shadow' in a brief note titled 'Do Your Duty'. Lines from the poems, such as:

*Yet true to our course, though our shadows grow dark  
We'll trim our broad sails as before,  
and stand by the rudder that governs the bark,  
Nor ask how we look from the shore.*

are reinforced by Taylor's direct address to his young readers:

Under all circumstances *do your duty*. Never mind what other people may think about you. It is better to have the approval of your conscience and the feeling that you have done *right* than the thoughtless applause of a multitude

valuing things not by their true worth but by the popular opinion of the day [...]. Let conscience ever be the rudder that steers your life's course, and whether in sorrow or joy (shadow or sunshine) it will little matter how your conduct may appear to those who only stand and look on. (*TSJ* March 1902, 90)

In contrast to some of the poems in the *Royal Readers*, Taylor chose not to include verse celebrating patriotism and war. Poems about Christmas by Longfellow and Whittier convey messages of peace, and the purpose of the latter's 'Disarmament' is clear: 'War fails, try peace: put up the useless sword' (*TSJ* February 1902, 76). Similarly Ruskin's 'Awake! Awake!' pictures a world free of war: 'For aye the time of wrath is past, and near the time of rest / And honour binds the brow of man, and faithfulness his breast' (*TSJ* August 1902, 174). Such poems would have appealed to Taylor's anti-war sentiments, which he expressed publicly in Hobart at the time of the Boer War (Robson 209).

The language and imagery of the poetry in the journals also resembled closely that of poetry in the nineteenth-century readers. Typical images pictured life as a challenging journey or battle to be faced with courage and resolve in hope of reward. Cary's 'Our Heroes' promises God's support to the boy who had the courage to do right:

Be steadfast, my boy, when you're tempted,  
To do what you know to be right.  
Stand firm by the colors of manhood,  
And you will o'ercome in the fight.  
The right! be your battle-cry ever  
In waging the warfare of life;  
And God, who knows who are the heroes,  
Will give you the strength for the strife. (*TSJ* March 1903, 89)

'Compensations' illustrates the Victorian concept of accepting one's current status in life with the promise of a happier existence in the hereafter:

Darkest clouds have silver linings;  
Rainbows span the storm-girt sky,  
Giving promise through the rainfall  
Of full sunshine by and by.  
Pain and anguish borne in patience  
Sweetest compensations hide,  
And with every crucifixion  
Comes a joyful Easter-tide. (*TSJ* March 1903, 89)



Horatius Bonar's poem 'Live The Creed' employs well-known nineteenth-century poetic imagery of growth and harvest to convey the importance of using 'well the moments as they go':

Sow love and taste its fruitage pure;  
Sow peace, and reap its harvest bright;  
Sow sunbeams on the rock and moor,  
And find a harvest home of light. (*TSJ* September 1902, 191)

The journals' poems addressed an audience of boys and rarely recognised the female sex. Their hortatory tone and hymnal diction was in marked contrast to the functional language and accessible style of the prose. With few exceptions, poetry for Taylor was a separate and elevated discourse, dealing with serious matters of behaviour and character. The rare exceptions were Grace Channing's 'The Wind' and Alfred Taylor's 'Earthquake'. These describe natural phenomena, the former using personification similar to Shelley's 'The Cloud', and the latter a narrative and evocative style in the manner of Scott and Tennyson:

Then came a sound as when  
A thousand horse-hoofs beat the plain; and all  
The earth seemed reeling in the heavy air.  
The waters hissing backward from the land  
Drew on again – and plunged – and swept the vale. (*TSJ* May 1902, 120)

Taylor's journal eventually failed for financial reasons. Its prose offerings had demonstrated the possibility of producing local material of interest to children, teachers and parents. Its poetry content confirmed a contemporary view of poetry as a vehicle for expressing themes of moral and social significance. Changes to this view of poetry were slow in coming. Even the poems by Tasmanians included in the reader dealt with traditional subjects such as 'sweet and pure' behaviour ('Influence'), the loyalty of animals ('Sentinel Jim's Dog') and the 'solace' of friendship, with no reference to Tasmanian landscapes or local issues. Although the short extract from Graves's 'Truganini' refers to an important event in Tasmanian history, its primary purpose is to extol a universal truth: 'But though our love be impotent to save, / Our love may smooth their pathway to the grave' (*TSJ* Dec. 1901, 36).

### **Prescribed readers in Tasmanian primary schools 1906 - 1925**

The poetry taught in schools from 1906 to the early 1920s was that included in the school readers and papers prescribed in the 1911 *Course of Instruction*:

Preparatory Class: *Tasmanian Primer I* and *Primer II*

First Class: *Tasmanian Reader Book I*

Second Class: *Tasmanian Reader Book II* and *Tasmanian History Reader Book I*

Third Class: *School Paper III* and *Tasmanian History Reader Book II*

Fourth Class: *School Paper IV* and *Tasmanian History Reader Book III*

Fifth Class: *School Paper V & VI* and *Tasmanian History Reader Book IV*

Sixth Class: *School Paper V & VI* and *Tasmanian History Reader Book V*

Students in all classes above preparatory were also expected to have read a supplementary Reader.<sup>20</sup> These compulsory reading materials were introduced progressively from 1906 until 1911. In December 1905 teachers were advised that from March the following year the *School Papers* would be 'the authorised reading books' for classes 3, 4, 5 and 6 and their use would be 'compulsory' (ER December 103). The *Tasmanian Primers I* and *II* were available by June 1906 and the *Tasmanian Readers I* and *II* by October 1907.<sup>21</sup> The *Tasmanian History Readers I, II* and *III* were in use by 1909 and *Readers IV* and *V* by May 1911 (ER May 1911, 180).

Only British history featured in the *Tasmanian History Readers*.<sup>22</sup> The first book was subtitled 'Tales of the Homeland', book two 'Stories from British History', book three 'Britons of Renown', book four 'from earliest times to 1603' and book five 'from 1603 to the Present Time'. Australia is not mentioned in any of these texts, even in the historical timeline included in book five that lists the founding of America and significant events in its history. *Tasmanian History Reader I* contained no poetry, but each of the other books concluded with a section titled 'Poetry for Recitation' that comprised four or more poems related to the history material in the books. The first *Tasmanian Primer* included no poetry in its contents, but the second primer contained 27 poems, grouped together at the end of the book following the prose lessons. Poems in the *Tasmanian Readers I* and *II* were interspersed with the prose lessons, with at least 7 additional poems at the end of the books specially selected for recitation. The *School Papers* for classes 3 to 6 were issued monthly and sometimes contained as many poems as prose passages for reading. The following

analysis is based on the contents of the history texts, primers, infant school readers and the contents of the 1910 and 1920 *School Papers* for the relevant grades.<sup>23</sup>

### ***The Tasmanian History Readers***

The 25 poems included in the *Tasmanian History Readers II-V* are listed in Table 17. The poems were narratives chosen to illustrate the prose lessons on English history. Poets included Byron, Thomas Campbell, H.W. Longfellow and Shakespeare, who were among the most frequently anthologised poets in nineteenth-century readers, and a 'new' poet, Edward Shirley, whose work featured regularly in school readers in the first decades of the twentieth century. Historical topics covered by these poems extended from the Viking and Roman invasions of Britain to the Crusades, Crimean War and the famous battles of Trafalgar and Waterloo. Several poems narrated the legends of King Arthur and Robin Hood and voyages of discovery made by explorers such as Humphrey Gilbert. As well as illustrating historical events, many poems served important didactic purposes relating to imperial pride, duty, deeds of valour and personal attributes of kindness and charity. Many of these themes were identical to those favoured by editors of nineteenth-century school readers, but here they were presented within the context of the needs of country and empire.

Two poems in *Tasmanian History Reader II* dwelt on the mission of an imperialist England that does 'her best / To spread abroad through all the land / The news of peace and rest':

Where'er the bright sun shineth  
Her messengers are found,  
With girded loins and staff in hand,  
Spreading the joyful sound. ("Non Angli sed Angeli Sunt", 146)

Shirley's 'Children of the Empire' calls on young people to uphold their 'noble heritage' for which their fathers had 'fought and died':

They toiled, they strove, they perished, that you and I might see  
The fair, free lands of Britain arise in every sea. (161)

Aspects of the character of the hero protagonists in these narratives served to illustrate and reinforce personal attributes considered appropriate for primary school children. Many poems focussed on concepts of duty and good deeds. Queen Victoria keeps her promise to 'do my duty' and is rewarded with the blessings of her subjects

(Book 2, 160). In 'The Mother's Book', King Alfred accepts his mother's challenge to study and understand a book depicting the lives of saints, and practises its 'lore' throughout his life. The poem's moral is made explicit in the final stanza:

Yet still a better thing he earned,  
And we may gain it too;  
This was what "England's Darling" learned –  
To make "I will!" 'I do!' (Book 3, 167)

Acts of duty encompassed defence of the country (Nelson's "Thank God, I've done my duty!" and Wellington who 'gained a hundred fights, / Nor ever lost an English gun') and coming to the aid of individuals in difficult circumstances ('The Battle of Trafalgar' Book 3, 173; and 'Wellington and Nelson' Book 5, 294). Sir Lancelot overcomes the Tarquin and releases King Arthur's imprisoned knights (Book 3, 158). Little John rescues a maiden from the clutches of an old, wealthy knight and restores her to the arms of Allen-a-Dale (Book 2, 154). The chivalry of Saladin, the Sultan of the Saracens, includes donating an Arab steed to King Richard when his horse dies in combat, and a common robber protects Queen Margaret and her son after the battle of Hexham (Book 2, 150, 156).

The strong imperialist ethic in these poems included the injunction to acknowledge leaders of skill and those in positions of power whose 'words or deeds'

help us in our daily needs,  
And by their overflow  
Raise us from what is low! (Book 5, 296)

Participation in the patriotic project of defending the country may bring glory and higher rank, as King Henry promises his soldiers on the eve of the battle of Agincourt: 'For he today that sheds his blood with me / Shall be my brother; be he ne'er so vile, / This day shall gentle his condition' (Book 4, 240). Several poems illustrate the beneficence and practical support bestowed on the common inhabitants by those in power. King Alfred shares his meagre supplies with a starving beggar, and Sir Philip Sidney on his deathbed shares his final 'goblet of blessing' with one whose need is greater than his (Book 3, 161, 165). The Norman baron frees his vassals and serfs as a dying gesture, recognising that

All the pomp of earth had vanished,  
Falsehood and deceit were banished,  
Reason spake more loud than passion,  
And the truth wore no disguise (Book 4, 237)

These poems suggest that the nation's leaders will care for citizens who do their duty for king and country. Acceptance of their common lot will bring eventual rewards, if not immediate personal freedom, or improvement in social status.

It is difficult to assess the extent to which the poetry in the *History Readers* was read and studied by pupils, or inspectors' expectations that this would occur. Inspectors rarely mentioned pupils' responses to these texts in their school and annual reports. Their focus was on the major reading materials prescribed in the *Course of Instruction*; accordingly, most of the poetry taught and examined in primary schools in the first two decades of the century was that in the *Tasmanian Primers, Readers* and *School Papers*. With the exception of the first *Tasmanian Primer*, poetry was well represented in these readers, consistently more so than had been the case with any of the readers prescribed in Tasmanian elementary schools during the previous century. Table 18 lists the number of poems and the total number of readings or lessons in each of these readers and demonstrates that the poetry content is never less than 44%, and at least 50% in four of the prescribed readers and papers.

### **Poetry in infant classes**

Poetry became a significant feature of infant education during the early decades of the century due largely to the influence of Amy Rowntree, Tasmania's first Infant Mistress and Mistress of Method who was responsible for the training of infant teachers (Fig. 8). Rowntree was a member of the first intake of student teachers at the Philip Smith Training College in 1906, and the influence of J.A. Johnson was obvious in her subsequent career as public speaker, writer and educator.<sup>24</sup> She also trained in infant education in Sydney, and, following her appointment as Inspector of Infant Schools in 1919, studied educational developments in England and Europe in 1923 (Phillips 240).<sup>25</sup> One of her early initiatives as an inspector was to increase the range of poetry taught in infant classes, selecting and publishing additional poems for use in these classes in several issues of the *Educational Record* during 1921. This was the first time poetry studied in Tasmanian classrooms was chosen locally and not by publishers and editors from elsewhere, although obviously Rowntree relied to some extent on their selections in making her choices.



Fig. 8. Amy Rowntree, MA (Tas).  
Inspector of Infant schools, Tasmanian Department of Education.

The 42 poems selected by Rowntree and the 77 poems included in *Primer II* and the *Tasmanian Readers I* and *II* formed a canon of 119 poems taught in infant classes until the 1950s. Only 3 poems were common to both the published readers and Rowntree's additional list. Forty-six of the poems were anonymous, but only 4 of these were from Rowntree's collection. Some anonymous poems, such as 'Minutes', 'Why Mother is Proud' and 'Just a Little Every Day' matched the category of 'improving verse' included in earlier readers; others included nursery rhymes and poems about nature, for example, 'Baa! Baa! Black Sheep', 'The Baby Plant' and 'A Spring Lesson'. The remaining 70 poems, written by 41 poets, are listed in Table 19.

All of these poems were new to the infant school poetry curriculum, although other poems by 12 of the poets had been included in nineteenth-century class readers. The most frequently represented poets were Edward Shirley and R.L. Stevenson (each with 6 poems), Ida Outhwaite (4), Rudyard Kipling, Longfellow, Gabriel Setoun and Tennyson (each with 3) and 'Aunt Effie' (Jane Euphemia Browne), Norman Gale, Maude Grant, George MacDonald, Veronica Mason and Ethel Turner with 2. Ten of these poets were new to the canon, only Kipling, Longfellow and Tennyson having featured in earlier readers. Rowntree included American and Australian writers in the additional poems she selected for schools and most of these had not been read in Tasmanian classrooms previously. These writers were the Americans Alice Allen, Eugene Field and Maude Grant, and the Australians Veronica Mason, Ida Outhwaite, Ethel Turner and Vincent Pyke. With the exception of Pyke, these were contemporary writers of children's verse. Veronica Mason was one of the first Tasmanian writers whose poems were read in Tasmanian classrooms.<sup>26</sup> Rowntree was obviously familiar with Australian and international poetry written, or considered appropriate, for young children.

The marked differences between the poetry selected for inclusion in the *Primer II* and the first two *Tasmanian Readers*, published before the end of the first decade of the century, and that chosen by Rowntree for publication more than ten years later indicate not only changing fashions over this time, but also Rowntree's influence on teaching approaches in infant classrooms. Most of the poems in the class readers were firmly in the tradition of poetry considered suitable for children in the previous

century.<sup>27</sup> Rowntree's selection was conditioned, at least in part, on an understanding of what would appeal to young children.

The 1911 *Course of Instruction* had stipulated that poems for junior classes should 'possess literary merit' and represent 'the bright and hopeful phases of life' (27). While it can be argued that these qualities were present in many of the poems in both the primer and readers, an equally important reason for their choice appeared to be that purpose which Neale stressed in his 1904 *Report on Primary Education*: '[poetry] is the literature of power and may be a great stimulus to good motive and good conduct' (41). The close parallels between the themes of the poems in the *Primer* and *Tasmanian Readers I* and *II* and those in previous readers is telling.

The first poem in *Primer II*, Robert Hughes's 'With a Primer', introduces children to a popular nineteenth-century theme that is reinforced by other poems in both the primer and readers. Because reading is a 'key / To sunder gates where wonder wakes' and a 'passport to the skies', children must apply themselves diligently to their task (2), for 'not a minute ever comes back' (64). Persistent application is important. Children will learn to read and write by doing just 'a little every day', because 'Never any one, I say, / Leaps to knowledge, and its power: / Slowly, slowly, hour by hour, / That's the way!' (*Reader II* 149). The poem 'Good Advice' reminds children that 'Things done by halves / Are never done right' (*Primer II* 57), and a robin redbreast busily building its nest points the moral that to be 'Blithe and busy' doing the 'best you can' will win praise (*Reader I* 66). These poems and 'Time to Rise' (*Primer II* 55) and 'Out Early' (*Reader II* 139) continue themes prominent in the poetry of the BFSS *Lesson Books* and *Irish Readers* fifty years earlier.

A number of poems highlight the importance of attributes of kindness and care. The nephew in 'Out Early' is 'up with the crows' in order to gather roses for his auntie (*Reader II* 139). Kindness to animals features in poems such as 'Dick's Bunnies' (*Reader I* 43) and 'The Birds' Sheaf' (*Reader II* 31). 'The Moon' instructs children 'to shine by love divine, / And gladden many hearts' (*Reader II* 41). Shirley's 'My Rose Tree' describes a child sharing blooms from a rose tree with a sad little boy (*Reader II* 109), and a farmer and his wife employ a fatherless boy so that he is able to support his mother and four younger siblings. This boy's diligence and



trustworthiness eventually bring him both property and a wife (*Reader II* 122). The poems 'Two to Make a Quarrel' (*Reader II* 116) and 'Dolly and Dick' (*Reader II* 145) match Watts's theme in 'Against Quarrelling and Fighting' from the *Irish Readers*. And a favoured earlier theme of love for mothers is found again in 'Why Mother is Proud' (*Reader I* 112), 'Who Loved Best' and 'Home is Best' (*Reader II* 141, 147).

At least 6 poems in the readers emphasise tractable and co-operative behaviour. 'Mr Nobody' points the moral of accepting responsibility for breakages, untidiness and carelessness (*Reader II* 144). The anonymous poems in *Reader I*, 'May and the Peacock' (35) and 'The Queen of the May' (55), warn children against judging by looks rather than actions. The second of these describes how 'little Nell, in her simple dress' is chosen as the Queen of May, rather than 'pretty Bess' or the 'merry and gay' Mary:

"Nellie is kind, and loving and good,"  
The boys and girls all say;  
"And we've never seen on the village green  
A sweeter Queen of the May." (*Reader I* 56)

Other poems promote the importance of a cheerful, happy and good disposition. Children grow up properly if they have a 'cheerful heart and a smiling face' (*Primer II* 62) and if, like the shepherd's dog, they are 'Clever, quick and willing' and 'always bright and jolly' (*Reader I* 26). They must never sulk (*Reader I* 49) and, like the waves on the shore, they should always 'keep to time and place' and 'keep the rule' (*Reader II* 77). Wyman's poem 'If I Knew' suggests that children's 'frowns' should be dropped in a box to the depths of the sea and that, instead, children should 'broadcast' smiles and 'hold them fast' (*Reader II* 104).

In contrast to earlier readers, patriotism and religion are not represented strongly in the *Second Primer* and *Readers I* and *II*. Patriotic themes are evident only in *Primer II* with Pyke's 'The Old Flag' and Kipling's 'The Children's Song'. Infant class children recited lines about fighting 'to the death [...] / For the brave old British flag' and pledged their heads, hearts and hands to the 'Motherland' (*Primer II*, 61). Direct religious references are found only in 'Welcome to Spring' and Shirley's 'The Good Shepherd'. Shirley's poem describes Christ as the shepherd of his sheep who will

‘watch’ and ‘shield’ and ‘gently bring / You home at last’ (*Reader II*, 137). Stodart’s celebration of spring’s colour and activity concludes:

God must be very good indeed  
Who made each pretty thing  
I’m sure we ought to love Him much  
For bringing back the Spring. (*Reader II*, 141)

In his 1904 *Report* and the *Course of Study* for preparatory classes (1905), Neale recommended that the content of poetry lessons should be correlated with history, geography and nature study. At least 13 poems in the infant school readers illustrated aspects of the natural world, the seasons in particular. Poems such as ‘The Baby Seeds’ (*Reader I* 111), ‘Song of the Falling Leaves’ (*Reader I* 119), ‘A Snow Song’ (*Reader II* 149) and ‘The Ploughman’ (*Reader II* 68) relate the seasons to the cycle of growth, decay, dormancy and re-growth. This cycle can be presented literally, as in ‘The Ploughman’ (*Reader II* 68), or linked with fanciful fairy activity, as in ‘About the Fairies’ in *Reader I* (117). Other popular subjects in this vein are cycles of night and day and the traditional personification of frost in, for example, ‘The Sun is Gone Down’ and ‘Jack Frost’ from *Reader I* (77 and 113).

Coleridge’s ‘The Months’ (*Reader I* 115) is a typical illustration of how poems dealing with subjects of the natural world in these readers are set in the Northern Hemisphere. No Australian poems feature in the readers, and the language and life of the British suffuses all the poetry, including those fanciful and imaginative poems that refer to activities popular with young children. Stevenson’s poem ‘The Swing’ (*Primer II* 59) refers to a castle, and some of the language and imagery of Shirley’s ‘See-Saw’ (*Reader II* 32) would be foreign to children’s experience of the activity.<sup>28</sup> Narrative is not featured in any poems except ‘Adrift’ (*Reader II* 114) and ‘A Donkey Race’ (*Reader I* 87). Apart from the two traditional lullabies – Tennyson’s ‘Sweet and Low’ (*Reader I* 116) and the anonymous ‘Slumber Song’ (*Primer II* 56) – almost all the poetry is didactic or correlated with other subjects included in the *Course of Instruction*.

Neale’s 1905 *Course of Instruction* recommended that the verse taught at this level should be that which could ‘be understood by little children’ and that teachers should ensure that pupils grasp ‘the vivid ideas’ of the poems before committing

them to memory (*ER* August 1905, 51). Certainly moral precepts in some poems were clothed in narrative and descriptive detail that might have appealed to young minds. Many poems, however, presented a particular vocabulary, and certain aspects of history, geography and nature study that fitted children for life in Britain, rather than extending their ideas about their native country.

### **Amy Rowntree and poetry in infant classes**

Amy Rowntree's approach to poetry in the infant school was shaped by her belief in the importance of 'the free, spontaneous rendering of the child's own impressions and emotions' (*ER* April 1922, 70), 'freedom and charm' in interpretation (*ER* June 1923, 117), and revelation and inspiration, rather than 'dull procedures' and 'accepted routines' (*ER* 1941, 105). Her lectures on poetry to infant school trainees noted the value of nursery rhymes, because of the primacy of sound at this stage of children's development.<sup>29</sup> She believed that sound conveyed emotion and that teachers presenting poetry to classes should capitalise on the artistry of poetry to achieve response and enjoyment. The value of poetry for her was to 'widen and deepen the emotional life and enrich the spirit'.<sup>30</sup> She urged trainee teachers to choose only 'beautiful' poems, 'those that grow lovelier with repetition', and also a range of poetic styles (ballad, epic, lyric, etc) and poems of humour. R.L. Stevenson, Christina Rossetti, Walter de la Mare and A.A. Milne were some of the poets she recommended for infant classrooms.

Rowntree published her selection of 42 poems for use in junior classes in the last four issues of the 1921 *Educational Record*. Several features of these poems are significant. Many of them were by living writers and written specifically for children. They were descriptive, non-didactic and often written in the first person and from a child's point of view. This last feature made the poems in Amy Rowntree's collection more appropriate for child recitation than many of the poems in the class readers. Because those poems were almost invariably written from an adult's perspective of childhood and were usually morally didactic, their rendition by children could appear artificial and even falsely pious.

Although the diction, imagery and content of much of their poetry were conditioned by traditional English verse, young Tasmanian readers would have identified

immediately with Outhwaite's poem 'The Little Creek' and Mason's 'Wattle', which, together with Paterson's 'Spring' included references to parakeets, swamps, and the bush, 'Olive-green, and brown and gray' ('The Wattle' *ER* October 1921, 137).<sup>31</sup> Veronica Mason's 'Home' is a brief extract from a much longer poem with the same title, and which the poet concludes by affirming that for her, too, England is home: 'And *It* belongs to Mine and Me, / So *I* shall call it – *Home*'.<sup>32</sup> Rowntree obviously did not want the children to deny their Tasmanian home and so concludes her extract with the opening lines of the penultimate stanza:

Now, I'm a small Tasmanian,  
I love my own dear land,  
Its deep blue seas that ebb and flow  
On curves of pearl-white sand. (*ER* October 1921, 137)

Despite this, commitment to the mother country was strong, and one of the only 2 poems from the class readers that Rowntree included in her collection was the Australian Vincent Pyke's 'The Old Flag' with its lines 'Though we dwell apart, we are one in heart, / And we'll fight for the grand old flag' (*ER* December 1921, 161). The aftermath of the First World War and the sense of patriotism and support for the British Empire that that conflict had engendered no doubt influenced this choice.

Rossetti's 'Boats Sail on the Rivers' was also common to both collections. To this Rowntree added Rossetti's 'Who has seen the Wind?' These two poems and the four she selected from Stevenson's poetry indicate the nature of the poems in the collection. They are written to be read aloud, are non-didactic in purpose, enter imaginatively into a young child's experience and present an aura of security and happiness. Stevenson's 'The Swing' (*ER* September 1921, 127) and Rossetti's 'Who has seen the Wind' (*ER* November 1921, 148) have heightened impact because of their direct address to the children, a style which would encourage vigorous and enjoyable recitation. Activities, such as swinging, playing 'pooh-sticks' with leaves on a river, and chasing shadows, all deal with activities familiar to young children. Even autumn fires in Stevenson's poem of that title are non-threatening and cause him to 'Sing a song of seasons! / Something bright in all!' (*ER* November 1921, 147). Young children would have had little difficulty understanding the simple diction and imagery in these 6 poems. Narrative poetry did not feature strongly in Rowntree's collection. She favoured poems describing children's activities in their

immediate surroundings and featuring such natural elements as wind, sun, moon, frost and rainbow. In contrast to the poems in the primer and two readers for junior classes, these poems focussed less on social activities and more on a child's personal response to the world.

### **The 'Tasmanian' School Paper**

As early as 1903, some Tasmanian primary schools were subscribing to monthly issues of the Victorian Education Department's *School Paper*. In his annual report for that year, Inspector Brockett commented that this paper was 'a regular and welcome visitant' in quite a number of his schools and served to promote 'the general habit of home reading' (*J&PP* 51, 1904, Paper 43: 8). Within the next three years, Neale completed arrangements with the Victorian Education Department to purchase copies of the papers to distribute to all Tasmanian schools, where they became the compulsory reading material for classes 3 to 6. Teachers and pupils welcomed these as a relief from the limited contents of one class reader each year. At the end of 1906, Inspector Lovell attributed a noticeable improvement in pupils' reading to the use of this 'attractive and interesting periodical' that 'made the reading lesson a pleasure instead of a dry task' (*J&PP* 57, 1907, Paper 10: 10).

The *School Papers* were edited by a Victorian school inspector, Charles Richard Long, and aimed to introduce children to 'our heritage of prose and poetry; to acquaint them with 'the classic stories of the ages'; and 'to develop in them an understanding love of Victoria, of Australia [and] the British Empire' (Musgrave, *To Be Australian* 5). The nature and range of the material included in these papers was similar to that in earlier readers, but now framed within an Australian context and the teaching programs of Victoria in particular, and Australian schools more generally.<sup>33</sup>

Charles Long was a member of the Shakespeare Society and a foundation member of both the Royal Historical Society of Victoria and the Australian Literature Society. Selleck describes the *School Paper* as providing children with 'a moral vision suffused with incipient Australian nationalism, an unwavering faith in the superiority of British ways and the middle-class values of thrift, industriousness, honesty, decent ambition and respect for the social order' (133). Titles of some of the prose passages included in the 1912 *School Paper* for classes 5 and 6 reflect these interests and

illustrate the range and nature of the material offered: 'Arbor Day', 'Athletes and Alcohol', 'Birds and Bird-lovers', 'A Brief Biography of Captain Matthew Flinders', 'Britain's Position among the Nations', 'The Brotherhood of Man', 'The Dignity of Labor', 'Early Settlements in Tasmania', 'Gardens Past and Present', 'Lessons from Nature', 'The Royal Australian Navy', 'Story of Regulus, the Roman General', 'Temperance' and 'Tom Brown's Last Cricket Match at Rugby' (*ER* Feb 1913, supplement). Long gave considerable emphasis to poetry and songs in each issue of the Paper, this material always comprising at least 40% of the contents and sometimes over 50%. Poetry and songs comprised about 50% of the 1906 Class 4 papers, 48% of the 1912 5 and 6 papers, 59% of the 1923 3 and 4 papers and 42% of those for classes 5 and 6 in 1923. These percentages reflect those in the sample of 1910 and 1920 papers included in Table 18.<sup>34</sup>

The *School Papers* were the prescribed reading material for Tasmanian classes 3 and 4 until 1927 and those for classes 5 and 6 until 1924. One monthly *School Paper* was produced for classes 5 and 6, but separate ones for class 3 and class 4 until the second decade of the century. The contents of the 1910 and 1920 papers for these four classes are the basis for considering the poets and specific poems from the nineteenth century which continued to feature in classrooms, and those new poets and works which were introduced in this period. Where appropriate, reference is made to *School Papers* from other years to illustrate and confirm conclusions drawn from this analysis.<sup>35</sup>

### **Continuity of poets and poems in the 1910 and 1920 *School Papers***

In 1910, the compulsory reading texts for classes 3 to 6 were monthly issues of three sets of the *School Papers*, separate sets for classes 3 and 4 and a combined set for classes 5 and 6. The papers for all classes included Christmas carols, lullabies, the British National Anthem and traditional songs such as 'Roast Beef of Old England', Robbie Burns's 'Auld Lang Syne', Payne's 'Home Sweet Home' and a musical setting of Campbell's 'Ye Mariners of England'. In the following analysis, the National Anthem and the songs mentioned by title will be considered as poetry. There were 44 anonymous poems and 138 attributed poems in the 1910 issues of the *School Paper*.

Table 20 identifies the 30 poets and their 16 poems in the 1910 *School Papers* that were included in the sample of nineteenth-century school readers, and also lists their 'new' poems included in these papers.<sup>36</sup> Of these 30 poets, Byron, Thomas Campbell, William Cowper, H.W. Longfellow, Thomas Moore, Walter Scott, William Wordsworth and Shakespeare were 8 of the 10 most frequently represented poets in the nineteenth-century readers. Only Felicia Hemans and James Montgomery of those 10 were not represented in the 1910 *School Papers*, although several of their poems were included in papers for other years. The 8 poets mentioned above were represented in the 1910 *School Papers* by 22 poems, 9 of which had been included in readers from the previous century. Campbell's 'The Harper [and his Dog]' and 'Ye Mariners of England', and Scott's 'Love of Country' had first appeared in the *Irish Readers* and, together with Longfellow's 'Wreck of the Hesperus', had been included in three separate sets of readers prescribed for Tasmanian schools in the previous century. These particular poems by Campbell and Longfellow do not appear in any future primary school readers examined in this study. Primary school children, however, studied Scott's 'Love of Country' at least until 1950. This poem and Wordsworth's 'The Daffodils' were the only 2 poems from the 1910 *School Papers* to be included in the *Tasmanian Readers* published in the 1930s.

Poems by Eliza Cook, George Croly, Robert Herrick, Victor Hugo and Bayard Taylor were not included in any subsequent readers prescribed for Tasmanian schools. Of the 20 poets in Table 20 whose work was represented in future readers, Robert Browning, Byron, John Keats, Henry Kendall, Henry Lawson, H.W. Longfellow, James Lowell, A.B. Paterson, Walter Scott, Shakespeare, Tennyson and Wordsworth were featured most regularly. Notable is the fact that the specific poems by these poets that were selected for reading and study in the twentieth century were different from those chosen previously. The poems by Longfellow, Tennyson and Shakespeare listed in Table 20, for example, suggest a change from purely historical subjects to more descriptive material. Changes in the popularity of the subjects and themes of primary school poetry are explored more fully below.

In 1920, the reading texts for classes 3 to 6 comprised monthly issues of two sets of *School Papers*; one set was a combined paper for classes 3 and 4, the other a

combined set for classes 5 and 6. Here there were 104 attributed poems and 26 anonymous poems and songs, the latter including 'The Ash Grove', 'An Arbor Day Hymn' and 'Bell-birds'.<sup>37</sup> As had been the practice since the 1840s, many of the anonymous poems were overtly didactic, as illustrated by titles such as 'Be Kind', 'Speak No Ill' and 'Good Life, Long Life'. The 23 poets and 8 poems featured in nineteenth-century readers that were included in the 1920 papers are listed in Table 21. The Table also includes 'new' poems by these poets.<sup>38</sup>

The 1920 *School Papers* included only 3 of the 10 most frequently anthologised poets in the sample of nineteenth-century readers, Byron, Longfellow and Shakespeare. The last two of these, together with Wordsworth and Tennyson, were among the most represented poets in issues of the *School Papers* from 1906 to 1924. Of the other poets most frequently represented in class readers in the previous century and not included in the 1920 papers, however, Thomas Campbell, William Cowper and Walter Scott were represented at least 7 times in other issues of the *School Papers* during this period.<sup>39</sup> Moore, Montgomery and Hemans received much less attention.<sup>40</sup> None of these 6 poets featured strongly in future primary school readers. Other poets included in the 1920 *School Papers* whose works were included in at least four other issues of the papers were Charles Mackay, Rudyard Kipling, R.L. Stevenson, and the Australians Kendall and Lawson.<sup>41</sup> Mary Howitt had appeared in some class readers since the BFSS *Daily Lesson Books* of the 1840s. Two of her poems ('A Swinging Song' and 'Fire') were included in other issues of the *School Paper* and one ('The Coming of Spring') was included in an edition of the third *Tasmanian Reader* in later decades.<sup>42</sup>

The presence of poets in the 1910 and 1920 *School Papers* who featured prominently in nineteenth-century readers reflected the continuing popularity of certain poetic subjects and themes. Several of the poems by Scott, Wordsworth, Campbell and Kipling presented patriotic themes that were popular in school readers near the end of the century. Others by Burns, Kendall, Stevenson and Wordsworth were descriptions of the natural world and confirmed the prominence given to nature study within the elementary curriculum in the same period. Charles Mackay's 'Tubal Cain', 'Be Thorough Boys' and 'Cheer Boys, Cheer' and Moore's 'My Mother' demonstrated a continuing focus on morally uplifting verse. Hunt's 'Love Thy



Neighbour' ('About Ben Adham') and Burns's 'Charity' (selected lines from 'Address to the Unco Guid') preached Christian virtues of love and tolerance. Campbell's 'The Harper' and Payne's 'Home Sweet Home' exemplified that strand of sentimentalism favoured by editors of earlier readers. Longfellow's 'Children' and Burns's 'Rosebush and Linnet' illustrated the practice of writing verse about children, rather than from a child's perspective. Longfellow's description of children as 'living poems' expressed the sentimental concept of innocent childhood popular among contemporary writers and educators (*School Paper* 3/4 1930, ii).<sup>43</sup> A quotation from Binney published in the June 1909 *Educational Record* uses similar imagery and provides a good example of this view of childhood:

I am fond of children. I think them the poetry of the world, the fresh flowers of our hearths and home; little conjurors with their "natural magic," working by their spells what delights and enriches all ranks and equalises the different classes of society [...]. (4)

In contrast, the growing popularity of Stevenson's poetry in school readers marked a changing approach to children's poetry. His poem 'The Wind' eschews an adult's representation of childhood and presents the subject from a child's point of view.

The poems by those poets prominent in nineteenth-century school readers that Charles Long included in the 1920 *School Papers*, however, heralded a change in the nature of poetry favoured for reading in classrooms in the next decades. Shakespeare, for example, continued to be popular, but there was an increasing emphasis on his songs and short aphoristic quotations, rather than on longer extracts from his histories and tragedies. By 1920, the major Romantic poets featured regularly in the *School Papers* and some of their more significant poems replaced those less representative of the writers' important themes. Keats's 'Chapman's Homer' and 'To Autumn' replaced his 'The Grasshopper and the Cricket' in the senior primary *School Paper* for that year. Although Wordsworth was not represented in the 1920 papers, changes in the choice of his poems in papers for other years provide a good example of this development. Poems most popular in the previous century, such as 'The Pet Lamb', 'To the Cuckoo' and 'We are Seven', appeared only rarely after 1920, when 'The Daffodils' became one of the most frequently read poems, and extracts from 'Tintern Abbey' and 'Intimations of Immortality' appeared in class readers.

### **New poets and poems in the 1910 and 1920 *School Papers***

Compared with the relatively small number and narrow range of poems in the yearly class readers, the monthly issues of the *School Papers* offered an extensive selection of poems with a variety of subjects and themes, and gave considerable emphasis to contemporary and Australian writers. Poets represented in the papers ranged from Chaucer to living and relatively unknown Tasmanian poets such as Alfred Waterworth.<sup>44</sup> Two hundred and four poets were included in the 1910 and 1920 papers, and 167 of these had not appeared in the sample of nineteenth-century readers. Of these 167 'new' poets, only 7 featured in both the 1910 and 1920 papers.

These 7 poets common to the 1910 and 1920 *School Papers* and their 17 poems, listed in Table 22, reveal some of Charles Long's editorial priorities. None of the poets is among the 10 most frequently anthologised poets in nineteenth-century readers. They are almost equally divided between English and Australian poets. As such, they signal both the decreasing representation of Scottish and Irish poets, and the increasing emphasis on Australian rather than American poets. All the 17 poems suggest an editorial respect for the serious and high purpose of poetry, rather than poetry written primarily for pleasure and amusement.

Noticeable in the poets common to the papers for both years is the continuing focus on Christian religion and morality. The nineteenth century's emphasis on individual salvation is evident in Keble's 'The Book of Nature', where elements of the natural world are 'pages' revealing God to man, and 'only sin' prevents people from 'reading' this 'mystic heaven and earth'. 'Pure eyes and Christian hearts' are the only requirements to find God (3/4 1920, 70). A less overt approach to religious issues is evident in Rossetti's 'Consider the Lilies' and 'Uphill'. The first of these poems presents a scriptural theme, comparing the lilies' brief blooms to the brevity of life, and assuring readers of the existence of a personal God who 'guards' them with his care (5/6 1910, 70). 'Uphill' uses the image of welcome and rest at the end of a day's journey to suggest comfort and peace in the hereafter (3/4 1920, v). Other poems by poets represented in both the 1910 and 1920 readers that also present Christian themes are 'The Angel of the Doves' (Brunton Stephens), 'Our Work' (John Keble) and 'A Christmas Carol' (Charles Kingsley).

Long's commitment to poetry with religious and moral themes is confirmed by his selection of 'new' poems for both the 1910 and 1920 papers, for example Arthur Clough's 'An Incident', Adelaide Procter's 'The Call to Serve', Leigh Hunt's 'Lilies' and W.S. Landor's 'Death'. Clough's poem extols the virtues of 'home and homely duties' and 'charities of daily life' in a world absorbed by 'love of gain', where 'none that seemed to think or care / That any save himself was there' (5/6 1910, 29). Leigh Hunt describes lilies as flowers of 'virgin light' and focusses on their symbolic qualities of chastity, innocence and purity (3/4 1920, 28). Procter celebrates aspects of Christianity, service being a form of Christian sacrifice rather than patriotic fervour (4 1910, 97). And the figure of 'Death' in Landor's lines, that whispers a 'strange language' without a 'word of fear', represents the Victorian idea of death being a welcome release from life's vicissitudes (3/4 1920, 111). Qualities of faith, trust and justice also feature in Betham-Edwards's 'A Child's Prayer' (3 1910), Norman McLeod's 'Trust in God and Do the Right' (4 1910) and Longfellow's 'The Statue of Justice' (5/6 1920).

Poems of patriotism and imperialism are represented in the 17 poems common to the 1910 and 1920 papers by Bulwer-Lytton's 'Where is the Briton's Home?' (3 1910) and George Essex Evans's 'Britain, Mother of Nations' (5/6 1920). Both poems extol the British Empire as the place where 'the brave heart can come' and where 'light and freedom' reign (3 1910, 59). At the same time, editor Long's desire to foster national pride is evident in his choice of Evans's 'Australia' (5/6 1910) and 'On the Plains' (3/4 1920), Brunton Stephens's 'An Australian Anthem' (4 1910), and both Daley's 'The Shepherd and the Sheep' (5/6 1920) and the extract from 'In the Australian Bush' (4 1910). The number of patriotic poems in the *School Papers* during this decade is explained to some extent by Australia's participation in the First World War. In his Foreword to the January 1915 issue of the paper, the editor wrote:

In view [...] of the great life and death struggle in which the Empire is now engaged, it would be well, as far as the upper classes are concerned, to strike a strong Imperial and patriotic note, while at the same time avoiding the recitation of poetry having for its theme anything that may tend to wound the susceptibilities of those who are fighting, together with ourselves, the battle of freedom. (177)

Poems included in that month's paper to 'strike a strong Imperial and patriotic note' included 'Rule Britannia', William Watson's 'Britain and her Colonies', Arthur

Benson's 'Hymn for Empire Day' and Newbolt's 'The Guides at Cabul'.

Collectively, these poems celebrated the extent and strength of the empire, claimed 'freedom's foes were Britain's foes' and called on 'Sons of the Island Race' to assist the overthrow of 'haughty tyrants' (982, 985, 986). Arthur Doyle's 'A Hymn of Empire' (5/6 1920) and Watkins's 'For King and Empire' (3 1910) defined patriotism as allegiance and service to the British Empire. When reciting Kipling's 'The Children's Song of Empire' pupils pledged their 'love and toil' to the British Empire and prayed for 'steadfastness' and qualities of Christian living in order 'to build from age to age / An undefiled heritage' (3/4 1920 53). Children expressed their loyalty to the British flag as they recited poems such as 'The Union Jack' (3 1910) and 'The Flag Goes By' (4 1910). John Symond's 'A Loftier Race' is one of the few poems in these papers that extend the concepts of the 'flame of freedom' and 'light of knowledge' beyond nationalism to the 'pulse' of 'one world fraternity' (5/6 1920 64).

The titles of poems in the *School Papers* for these two years, such as the anonymous 'The Better Way' and 'The Three Rules' (3 1910) and 'Smiles and Frowns' and 'Never Say Fail' (3/4 1920), reveal a legacy of pious and moral verse for young children. Swinburne's 'A Child's Laughter' is typical of an established strain of sentimental poetry celebrating childhood and addressed to parents and adults rather than children. The laughter of Swinburne's child is 'the sweetest one / Heard of man beneath the sun' and far sweeter than that of 'the birds of heaven' (3/4 1920, 83). Inglis notes that a 'sentimental regard for the good little child' was widespread towards the end of the nineteenth century and refers to the popular paintings 'Bubbles' (Millais) and 'Little Lord Fauntleroy' (Burnett) as examples of this (9). And Gurney explains that the Romantic nostalgia 'for a lost innocence' is sometimes associated 'with the vanished paradise of childhood [...]' (19).

Neil Philip defines children's verse as that written explicitly for children, 'attuned to the child's viewpoint' expressing 'immediate sense perceptions' and feelings of 'wonder', and in which 'performance' qualities of sound and rhythm are strong (xxv-xxvii). Very few poems in the 1910 and 1920 papers that are written explicitly for children meet these requirements. Most of these poems present lively descriptions, but then adopt an adult's viewpoint with 'a message' for the young. Typical of such

poems are Mrs Alexander's 'The Farmyard', Searby's 'Is it True' (3 1910) and Tilly Aston's 'A Bird's Nest' (4 1910). Poems which succeed to some extent in describing scenes and events from a child's viewpoint and eschew any didacticism are Jane Andrews's 'Ocean's Children', Frances Broderip's 'The Fairy Shallop' and George MacDonald's 'The Singing River' (3 1910). Louisa Meredith's 'Laughing Jackasses' (3 1910) successfully meets Neil Philip's definition by its realistic description of a bush incident, written from the children's perspective and in language and a style immediately accessible to them. 'Laughing Jackasses' was drawn from Meredith's collection of verse, *Waratah Rhymes for Young Australia* (1891), addressed specifically to young people and following the tradition established by Christina Rossetti's *Sing-song: A Nursery Rhyme Book* (1872) and Stevenson's *A Child's Garden of Verses* (1885). Long gathered poems from these earlier collections for publication in other years: Rossetti's 'Boats Sail on the Rivers' (1919) and 'What is Pink' (1923); and Stevenson's 'Bed in Summer' and 'The Sun's Travels' (1923). Children's verse by Eugene Field appeared in school papers during these years, notably 'Little Boy Blue' (1916 and 1924) and 'Wynken, Blynken and Nod' (1923) drawn from his *A Little Book of Western Verse* (1889).

The inclusion for the first time of John Masefield's 'Sea Fever' in the 1920 papers marked the beginning of this poet's popularity in Tasmanian classrooms for the next three decades, and also the increasing popularity of themes relating to adventure and escape from the immediate present. Masefield's 'wild call and a clear call that cannot be denied' could be described as 'a romance of the blue horizon' prevalent in several of Kipling's poems and some of the Australian poetry included in the papers (3/4 1920, 149).

### **The advent of Australian poetry in primary schools**

The Australian poets Victor Daley, George Essex Evans and J. Brunton Stephens were in the group of the 7 poets whose poems were included in both the 1910 and 1920 *School Papers*. Almost one-third of all identified poets included in the papers for these years were Australian writers. Given the poetry contents of previous readers prescribed for Tasmanian primary schools, access to such a significant number of Australian poets in the early decades of the century was revolutionary for both

teachers and students. Australian poetry, with minor exceptions, was not available in the texts prescribed for secondary and tertiary students until the mid-1940s.

While the majority of these Australian poets had published collections of verse and were known within the contemporary literary community, some were obscure amateur poets whose work was accepted for publication by the editor.<sup>45</sup> Those poets it is possible to identify as Australian and their poems are listed in Table 23.<sup>46</sup> The inclusion of 47 Australian poets and 63 of their poems in the papers for these two years indicates the variety of the country's writers available to schools during this period. At least 30 of these were contemporary poets, still writing when the *School Papers* were published. Fewer than 10 had died before the turn of the century. A significant minority had taught in schools for some part of their adult lives. More than half were native born, or had spent most of their formative childhood in Australia. The 11 women poets in the list represented a greater proportion of women writers than had been available in earlier prescribed readers.

Victor Daley, George Essex Evans, A.B. Paterson and Brunton Stephens were each represented by 3 poems in the papers for these years; Arthur Bayldon, James Cuthbertson, Henry Kendall, John Mathew, William Ogilvie, Marie Pitt and Alexander Sutherland by 2.<sup>47</sup> Poems by all of these poets, except Bayldon, Mathew and Brunton Stephens, were included in the sample of *School Papers* for years other than 1910 and 1920, and some of these additional poems will be included in the following discussion. In total, 28 of the 47 poets listed in Table 23 were included in other issues of the papers. Australian poets not featured in the 1910 and 1920 *School Papers* whose poems appeared in other papers published between 1906 and 1926 included Ernest Favenc, James Hebblethwaite, Dorothy Mackellar, Veronica Mason, Shaw Neilson and John Sandes, and several of their poems will also be discussed below. Veronica Mason and James Hebblethwaite, together with Marie Pitt and Louisa Meredith listed in Table 23, lived in Tasmania for significant periods of time and featured aspects of the State in their poetry. Charles Harper and Frank Wilmot are two prominent Australian poets whose writing was not included in the *School Papers* for these two years.

The subject matter and themes of many of these Australian poems relate closely to other poems in the papers and to the poetry in the earlier school readers. They convey similar moral, religious and patriotic themes and descriptions of aspects of nature, sometimes couched in a familiar didactic frame. Here, however, there are differences in the degree of attention given to these subjects. The most obvious differences, of course, relate to the emerging images and concepts of Australia that this poetry presented to children and the extent to which new themes developed from these ideas.

Only a few of the poems listed in Table 23 could be described as didactic in the manner of many poems included in the nineteenth-century elementary class readers. The theme of Tilly Aston's 'A Bird's Nest' is similar to that of 'The Bird's Nest' from the BFSS *Daily Lesson Book I*.<sup>48</sup> The children in Aston's poem pick 'the long clematis strand / About the tea-tree clinging', and destroy a bird's nest in the process. The parent bird's calls of distress arouse regret:

And we were sorry to have spoiled  
The joy for which the bird had toiled,  
And yet had never tasted. (4 1910, 129)

C.A.H. Searby's 'Is it True?' re-iterates the popular nineteenth-century theme of application to work in order to achieve rewards. It is still possible to emulate 'men of fame', but only if 'we try / With them to vie'. The poem concludes with the imperative: 'Come then, / To work again!', a theme stressed frequently in the *Irish Readers* in poems such as 'A Minute' and 'The Two Gardens' (3 1910, 122). DeWolfe Howe identifies certain personal qualities young people must display if they wish to be 'true' Australians. They must be of 'gentle soul and pure' and possess the 'zeal and courage' that will bring 'the best that life can give' (4 1910, 123). Mary Gilmore's 'Green Spears' conveys a theme similar to Whittier's 'Disarmament' (*School Papers* 1911, 1921), and in 'Tubal Cain' from earlier class readers.<sup>49</sup> Gilmore urges a sacred trust in the land, rather than in war. The 'thin green spears' of grass form an army of peace and productivity:

Turn to the grass  
And put away grief;  
The grass is not fearful  
Its swords are in sheaf. (3/4 1924, 121)

The only reference to God in these four poems is in Gilmore's final injunction to her readers: 'Praise God for the grass / That covers up tears'. That there are fewer poems focussing on religion in this list of Australian poems is explained partly by the Victorian Government's policy of secular education (Musgrave 'Readers in Victoria' 5), and because Australian poets appeared to be less preoccupied with religious issues than were many of the British poets included in contemporary school readers. Where religion did feature in the poetry under discussion, it was usually within the context of themes of patriotism.

Examples of patriotic verse with religious overtones are Brunton Stephens's 'Australian Anthem', Veronica Mason's 'Flag Song', Edwin Watkins's 'For King and Empire' and Annie Finlay's 'The Children's Tribute'. Stephens employs the traditional imagery of nineteenth-century hymns and the metre of the British National Anthem to seek God's blessing on Australia. He prays that the nation will be 'Mighty in brotherhood [...] Labour and Liberty', will experience 'Plenty' and be 'One great Australian band [...] / Strong to defend our right' and 'Proud in all nations' sight' (4 1910, 49). The poem obviously refers to Australia, but contains no specifically Australian vocabulary or context. Neither does Mason's 'Flag Song', which extols the 'tale of Britain's glory' rather than expressing hopes for her native land. Britain is the 'dear Motherland' and Australia one of her 'sons and daughters' charged with celebrating and continuing her 'noble story'. The British flag that people live and die for represents 'Honour, Duty, Brotherhood' and 'God, and King, and Right'.<sup>50</sup> Similarly Watkins's 'For King and Empire' is a supplication to God to protect the king and grant his empire 'thy gifts in plenteousness' (3 1910, 63). Annie Finlay's 'The Children's Tribute', written on the occasion of the Prince of Wales's visit to Australia, expresses the hope that 'Heaven's high favor' will keep the prince's life 'as sweet' as the 'tide of youth that flows about his feet' (5/6 1920, 91).

Other patriotic poems, such as J.W. Meaden's verses predicting Victoria's 'gathering greatness' (3 1910, 94) and E.J. Brady's 'To Australian Seamen' (5/6 1910, 64), foresee future greatness for the country and courage for its men, but within the context of the British heritage, the 'glories' of the 'Fatherland' and war heroes such as Nelson. Similarly, John Sandes's 'The House of Empire' focusses on the 'glorious memories' of Britain's achievements and how her empire's 'great fleet' will protect



‘the bush and the veldt and the prairie [...] / As long as the stars give light’ (5/6 1917, 50). In these instances, Britain and her empire seem to assume the spiritual qualities of an omnipotent yet benign and protective power. In ‘Christmas in Australia’ Daly celebrates the coming of Christ ‘beneath this bluer sky’ of Australia, but devotes most of his sonnet to recalling the season of Christmas in England, affirming in traditional poetic diction that

Our hearts have not yet lost the ancient cheer  
That filled our fathers’ simple hearts when sere  
The leaves fell, and the winds of Winter froze  
The waters wan, and carols at the close  
Of yester-eve sang the Child Christ anear. (5/6 1910, 169)

J. Brunton Stephens’s ‘The Angel of the Doves’ is a religious poem unrelated to British or Australian patriotism. The poet uses narrative and allegory to present Christian messages about the sin of man, his redemption by the coming of Christ to earth, his continuing sinful state and need for a Second Coming. The poem is the most Christian of any poem in the list, using images such as ‘the mystic shape of the Holy Ghost’ and ‘a veil of flesh’, and references to the sacrificial lamb (5/6 1910, 136). The poem bears no relationship to Australians or the Australian landscape. In ‘The Shepherd and the Sheep’, however, Daly calls on a ‘gentle goddess’, who has protected shepherds and their sheep throughout history, to care for Australia and the country’s shepherds on the ‘vast and silent plains / Wherein the white merinos dwell’:

Australia’s way is hard to keep  
Though she is bold and fair;  
O Keeper of the Shining Sheep,  
Take her into Thy care! (5/6 1920, iv)

Other poets experience some religious or spiritual response to aspects of the Australian landscape. The instinctive westward flight of the black swans prompts Paterson’s observation that man’s fate is ordained by a ‘mighty power with a purpose dread’ (5/6 1910, 129). And J.L. Cuthbertson compares the sea’s ‘passionate music’ off Cape Schanck in Victoria to ‘the blast of an angel’s trumpet’ that ‘rings out’ to the earth and skies (5/6 1910, 96). John Sandes’s ‘An Australian Hymn’ contains no references to Britain, but seeks God’s protection for ‘our Austral land’ with its

'lory's call' and 'bell-bird's note'. The third stanza lists the unique qualities of the land that Sandes describes as our 'heritage' and 'gift' from God:

The gully robed in fern,  
The creek's glad minstrelsy,  
Where bright the wattle blossoms burn  
With fire from Thee,  
Green hillside and grey rock,  
The stockyard and the mine,  
The boundless plain, the countless flock  
All, all are thine. (4 1906, 114)

In 'An Austral Sky', Alexander Sutherland finds the 'joys of life and living' in the Australian skies which 'unfold / Their dome of spotless blue / In far ethereal places':

No vision drear of man is here,  
Despair comes never nigh;  
But hope exults with healthful cheer  
While heaven is lifted high. (5/6 1920, 5)

Some of the poems included in the *School Papers* place an increasing emphasis on pride in Australia as a nation. Paterson's 'The Explorers' depicts the 'westward march' of Australian explorers as a 'miracle' of bravery equal to the feats of Greek and Roman heroes (5/6 1920, v). Favenc's 'Song of the Torres Strait Islanders' and Hugh McCrae's 'Flinders' Vow' celebrate the heroism of earlier explorers who sought 'lands that no eye hath seen – / Far stretches of virgin soil' (5/6 1912, 146). Rather than featuring Australian history, however, most poems focus on aspects of the country's landscape and potential as a nation. Despite still calling England 'Home', Veronica Mason pledges identity with Tasmania as her 'own dear land', expressing 'love' for its 'blue seas that ebb and flow / On curves of pearl-white sand', the 'trackless ways' and 'tall and solemn trees' of the 'vast and silent bush', the 'colour-flash of parrots' wings / In sunny crystal air, flocks grazing on 'lonely runs' and 'blossoming orchards fair' (3/4 1924).<sup>51</sup> In traditional poetic diction, Caroline Carleton's 'Song of Australia' presents the country in idyllic terms. Its colour and light are 'witching harmonies' and the land is a place of 'myrtle and the rose' where honey, corn and grapes abound and 'gold lies hid, and rubies gleam'. Life is romanticized so that 'homesteads peep / From sunny plain and woodland steep, / And love and joy bright vigils keep'. Australians are 'Freedom's sons', not 'shackl'd' slaves (3 1910, 95). Edward Loughran's 'To Australia' echoes these

sentiments of a land free and prosperous, in his description of 'Myriads of fleeces  
dotting mead and lea / The forest falling 'neath the gleaming blade', and

Nearer along the ocean's heaving breast,  
Fair as a dream against the sunset fires,  
Bright cities, ne'er obeyed a despot's hest,  
Nor heard war's thunder-roar against their spires. (5/6 1910, 82)

The strong patriotic and nationalist sentiments in many of these poems continue to be expressed in a sentimental 'romantic' language and imagery similar to that of many poems considered appropriate for elementary children in the previous century. Ida Lee's 'The Homestead' employs this language in her description of a farmer's return to his homestead at the end of the day, the theme itself replicating a popular nineteenth-century subject, expressed in poems such as Mary Howitt's 'Father is Coming':

Across the sward, the thronging cattle pass,  
Their colours blurred, as, in one moving mass,  
Loosed from the yard, the panting creatures seek  
Their restful pastures by the flowing creek.

The language of the Victorian 'dying fall' in expressions such as the 'faded splendour' of the 'dying sunbeams' and the 'Long, slanting shadows' that 'creep from out the shade' is designed to heighten the sentimental happiness of the farmer's return to his family, as

A happy smile lights up his sunburnt face  
When, on the breeze, sweet voices he can trace  
Of those he loves, who watch for him and wait  
To give him welcome at the open gate. (4 1910, 91)

Brian Elliott writes that Dorothea Mackellar's 'My Country' (5/6 1909) is 'full of stock suggestions' of the landscape 'aesthetic' of her day (1). This is certainly true, but the poem's effectiveness as a description of the Australian landscape is its more comprehensive and balanced depiction of facets of the country than poems such as Carleton's, and the fact that it is expressed in language more idiomatically Australian. 'My Country' provides a summary of the motifs and themes of much of the Australian poetry in the *School Papers* during this period, particularly in relation to the land's varying landscapes and diversity of climate. Most of these poems describe certain aspects of the country, a particular time of day, a season, a certain

geographical region and specific flora and fauna. Several, such as William Ogilvie's 'The Filling of the Swamps' (3/4 1920) and N.F. Spielvogel's 'Our Gum-trees' (5/6 1910), accept and celebrate the harshness and natural beauty of the land for what it is, with no regret or disillusion. Others, such as Favenc's 'An Ideal of the Future', acknowledge the dry centre of Australia as a 'realm of hunger, of thirst, of fear', but predict a future time when Australia will be a land of plenty with 'lowing herds and bleating flocks', when the sun will shine 'on the peaceful scene / Of farm, and orchard, and vineyard green' (5/6 1908, 42-3).

Mackellar wrote her poem as an absentee from the country, longing to return. Some of the other Australian poems in the *School Papers* express similar feelings, the landscape they describe prompting a desire to be elsewhere in time or place. In such cases, there is often that note of lament, nostalgia or sense of isolation found in poems from previous class readers, such as Moore's 'The Meeting of the Waters', Campbell's 'The Soldier's Dream' and William Cowper's 'Alexander Selkirk'. Primary school children and their teachers would have been familiar with such traditional themes and the language and form in which they were couched. Most of the Australian poems in the papers maintained these themes, but some presented them in a 'poetic voice' that employed the country's unique language and ethos. These poems illustrated both the traditional literary heritage and an evolving national literary style.

Traditional literary themes presented in contrasting 'poetic voices' are evident in the large group of poems about Australian birds. Louisa Meredith's 'Laughing Jackasses' describes a simple incident in language purely Australian (3 1910). By contrast, James Thomas's 'To a Silver Eye' and Will Carter's 'The Wagtail' describe their subjects in relatively anonymous settings with poeticisms such as 'Thou merry little silver-eye' and 'I hear thy voice, sweet feathered friend' (3 1910, 131; 3/4 1920, 140). Arthur Bayldon in 'A Bush Canary' and R.H. Long in 'Boobook Owl' describe bush settings in which they hear the song of a native bird. Bayldon's setting with its 'tawny pool [...] / With large blue lilies spread' and the 'Wild roses breathing odour sweet' is not necessarily localised to Australia. Long's setting is specifically Australian with its 'selector's scanty crop of hay', the 'dim and sombre bush' and

references to flying-foxes, possums, dingoes and wallaby. Bayldon's response to the song of the bird, described as a 'woof of trillings wild', is romantically ecstatic:

A bush canary – hark! oh hark!  
His raptures fill the vale,  
Kin spirit of the frenzied lark  
And sobbing nightingale;  
A feathered fount from dawn to dark  
Showers pearl-notes quick as hail. (5/6 1910, 141)

Long's response is direct, and laconically Australian. Twice he cites the sound of the owl 'Mopoke! Mopoke!' and then concludes the poem with a simple question: 'But what were night without the Boobook owl?' (3/4 1924).<sup>52</sup>

Thomas Heney's 'The Wild Duck' is similar in theme to Paterson's 'Black Swans', as he imagines the bird's experiences on its migratory flight, but his language and imagery are cast in the traditional poetic mould. The poem's opening line ('Tell me the charm of thy haunts, O bird!') contrasts markedly with Paterson's 'As I lie at rest in a patch of clover / In the Western Park when the day is done'. And the contrast in the diction of the two poets is heightened by the style of Heney's third stanza that begins: 'How oft sought'st thou rest in darkling glade [...] / Where centurial trees o'erspread their shade'. Both Paterson and Heney use their subjects to describe aspects of the country, Heney concluding with one of the rare references in the poetry of the *School Papers* to a 'corroboree's measured dance' and 'the chant of the savage throng' (5/6 1910, 143).

Frank Williamson's 'The Magpie's Song' illustrates a combination of traditional classical allusion and authentic Australian references and language.<sup>53</sup> The poem begins with classical references to the nightingale's 'sorrow-burdened lay', singing where 'the dreaming Tiber wanders by the haunted Appian way'. This provides an opportunity to describe the 'sweeter song' of the 'magpie's windblown music where the Gippsland rivers flow', its 'warble in the blue-gums on the hill' and in other settings such as Matlock, Goulburn and by the sea. For Williamson, the magpie's song is the 'Voice of happy shepherd chanting by a stream in Arcady', bringing to his current setting and mood ('the dark hour in the city' in the presence of 'the grey-winged vulture, Sorrow') a 'song of hope' which he wishes to hear at death: 'when I

slumber at the last / Let your music in the joyous wind be ever wandering past' (5/6 1910, 85).

The traditional practice of using an incident or experience to release the writer from present circumstances and sometimes to recall pleasant memories of younger days was employed by many of the Australian poets Long included in the *Papers*. Thus Henry Kendall 'in the city and alleys' hopes to retain memories of the 'notes of the bell-birds' as he yearns for 'power and the sweetness' to compose passionate lyrics of 'beauty and strength' (3/4 1920, v). For John Mathew, the Kookaburra is a 'jocund bawler' whose 'wildwood laughter' gives him 'cause to laugh and sing' and so escape 'this world's corroding cark' (3/4 1920, 129. A butcher-bird's song at dawn transports Samuel Cornstalk so that he feels his soul 'has wings' (3/4 1920, 134); and another butcher-bird's 'sweet, stirring song' causes Lorimer's heart to 'leap' (3 1910, 134).

Among the 5 poems that address the season of Spring are several which illustrate the strength of this escapist theme and the traditional poetic 'voice' in which it is expressed. Helen Jerome's 'Coming of Spring: A Suggestion' is the shortest of this group, simply listing sights, smells and sounds of the landscape that bring with them a suggestion of the coming of Spring: a 'whiff of rose', a 'glint of sunlight' and a bird's 'burst of song' (3/4 1920, 128).<sup>54</sup> 'Resurgent' by Bernard O'Dowd and Roderick Quinn's 'Spring Song', although more developed than Jerome's poem, are both primarily concerned with celebrating the signs of Spring. O'Dowd personifies Spring, describing her as 'throwing favours', such as flowering wattle, native heather and the 'pink convolvulus', and presenting the season as a time of youth (3/4 1920, 113). Quinn's poem is an imperative to the reader – 'Sing out and be happy! / The Spring is at hand' – and describes nature's indicators that Spring is near. In contrast to the two earlier poems, however, in these poems Spring invites flight ('Distant blue reaches / And green hills invite') and the rejection of trouble and sorrow:

Sing out! and let trouble  
Another pursue:  
It will burst like a bubble  
And vanish for you. (3 1910, 144)

Neilson's 'A Bush Scene' is an invocation to Spring and an occasion for him to associate this 'emblem' of youth with a wish to be elsewhere: 'Oh that we could, as thee, rise from the night / To find a world of blossoms lilac-white' (3/4 1926).<sup>55</sup> Similarly, in 'An Australian Spring Day' Christian Coutts pictures 'balmy Spring' as heralding a brighter future: 'Thou comest as a messenger / From heavenly lands beyond' (3 1910, 82). In 'A Spray of Wattle Blossom', a sprig of wattle 'grown so far away' reminds Jennings Carmichael of other scenes and happier days while living 'amid the gloom / Of city smoke and dust and glare'. She addresses the spray of wattle:

Surely thou knowest, not from home –  
Thy home and mine – I willing roam!  
Ah! couldst thou guess how fancy flies  
To those bush shades and forest skies,  
Far from these city stones! (4 1910, 68)

Specific references to the Australian landscape and Australian idiom are rare in these poems. Traditional features of poetic landscape such as hillocks, fields, vales, a 'blithe newcomer' and the 'bleating of lambs' outnumber the few references to Australian gullies, creeks, jackasses and she-oaks.

Many poems in the *School Papers* describing writers' emotional responses to the landscape imply dissatisfaction with current realities and express feelings of nostalgia and wistful regret, or a belief in better times beyond the horizon. In both theme and tone, some of these poems are imbued with Victorian pessimism and melancholy. Such qualities are evident in Gordon's 'Bush Delights' where the poet rests alone 'Neath the vault of the azure sky' and yields to 'memories old' (5/6 1908, 23).<sup>56</sup> His distance from busy urban scenes, pleasure in solitude and memories of days long past are stock responses favoured by other poets in the papers. Carmichael, in 'An Old Bush Road', returns to a scene of her youth, and contrasts her present circumstances with former pleasures. She regrets their passing:

Dear old road, no wonder, surely,  
That I love thee like a friend!  
And I grieve to think how surely  
All thy loveliness will end.  
For thy simple charm is passing,  
And the turmoil of the street  
Soon will mar thy sylvan silence  
With the tramp of careless feet.

Yet although the old road, 'wheel-worn and broken', may disappear, the memories of those happy times it represents will be sustained by a 'sunny landscape' where

Something still remains of Nature,  
Thoughts of other days to bring:-  
For the staunch old trees are standing,  
And I hear the wild birds sing. (5/6 1912, 65)

Marie Pitt's 'Bairnsdale' is also a wistful remembrance of things past, this time of the town of her childhood and school days. These memories allow Pitt to break 'free of day's poor broken schemes', and experience 'peace'. Memories set her 'spirit free' with an apparent sense of religious relief. Connotations of the Christian eucharist are present in her recollections of wattle blossom:

One headland where the wattles pour  
On his brown bosom as of old,  
From Spring's green chalice brimming o'er  
Libation of September gold.

The little school she attended as a child becomes in memory a 'wayside chapel', a 'place apart' for sacred vows and prayers.

Ah! who shall say what vows long made,  
What prayers like lilies incense-crowned,  
Live yet beneath your pine-trees' shade  
to keep you always holy ground? (3/4 1920, 97)

Some of the Australian poetry in the *School Papers* modified this theme to incorporate a physical escape from the present to an Eldorado beyond the horizon. Paterson's 'vision splendid of the sunlit plains extended' attracts Clancy's correspondent to desert 'the cash book and the journal' for open spaces and the bush. Even here there could be religious connotations, the 'vision' representing a new heaven and earth – a 'spacious firmament on high' ('the wondrous glory of the everlasting stars'), and a world of friendship, kindness and song (the 'kindly voices' of the 'murmur of the breezes and the river on its bars') (4 1906, 122). John Wagner's 'An Australian Cradle-song' and Marion Knowles's 'Where the Wattle Blooms' both portray an Eden of elsewhere. For Wagner's child, sleep is a magical experience, a 'land where the fairies dwell' which is particularly Australian in setting. Here 'the wattle loosens her golden hair' and a 'bell-bird's note doth sweetly ring' to the fountains' 'silver spray' (5/6 1908).<sup>57</sup> Knowles, too, wants to experience



the 'wild fresh breezes', to be 'out on the hills' and bury her face in the golden showers of wattles. Here the 'distant plash of the flowing fountains' stirs her blood 'like a bugle call', and the 'glad birds singing 'carols of love and mirth' and the 'blue-bell ringing' create 'Fairy music o'er the earth' (4 1906, 119). Both these poems combine an inherited poetic voice and an emerging Australian vocabulary, yet even here the first of these triumphs, references to traditional poeticisms such as 'shady dell', 'dewy grass' and 'brooks' outnumbering those to wattles and bellbirds.

'On the Plains' by George Essex Evans and the Tasmanian James Hebblethwaite's 'Wanderers' (III/IV 1924) are more positive in outlook and less encumbered with traditional poeticisms. Evans's vision of the open plains is an imaginative escape from a world where 'the days are dull and grey, / And Youth has stilled his joyous song'. His pleasure in detailing features of the plains, such as the golden sunrise, the 'vagrant lark' addressed as 'Thou brown-winged angel', and the pink-breasted galahs described as a 'rosy cloud in a cloudless sky', are edenic in intent. As he watches cattle grazing and takes his ease in the shade at noon, life for Evans is reminiscent of Gordon's description in 'By Wood and Wolde'. Reality, however, returns and the poet's regret that 'Hope and Youth [...] pass away' prompts his injunction:

Inscribe in letters of delight  
Upon each heart one golden day –  
To be there set  
When we forget  
There is joy in living yet! (3/4 1920, ix)

This 'living' for Hebblethwaite is one of action and adventure, perhaps as Elliott suggests a reference to the pioneer spirit (147). His loggers' chorus of 'Pull up the stakes and go!' enjoins his readers to act and participate in life to the full while the 'world is wide and we are young [...] / And passion pipes her sweetest call', and before before death 'strikes our tent' (3/4 1924).<sup>58</sup>

In his paper 'The School Use of Poetry' presented to a conference of the Victorian Teachers' Union in 1910, C.R. Long discussed 'the procedure the Australian teacher should adopt towards the verse productions of his own land'. It is instructive to compare several points he makes on this subject with the nature of the Australian poetry he selected for the school papers.

“Poets’ seasons when they flower” are rare, and I have to admit that there is, in our young literature, but little, if any, poetry which, on its merits as poetry, should displace in the school the widely accredited productions of the masters of song. But Australia has a history and geographical conditions peculiar to itself; Australians cherish aspirations, face problems, and live lives that are distinctively Australian; and there has been and is no lack of endeavour to express phases of these in verse. It seems to me incumbent on teachers to acquaint themselves in some measure with these local productions, to give their pupils a knowledge of what they conceive to be of real value in them, and to seek to create an interest in, and stimulate to, literary effort. I would, without a pang, set aside some of the poetry – however fine it may be – descriptive of old-world incidents and scenes – those “unhappy far-off things and battles long ago” – to make room for such a poem as the late Essex Evans’, “The Women of the West,” with its vivid picture of life “outback,” and its power to bring home to the young a sense of the self-sacrificing devotions of their mothers. (*ER* October 1910, 74)<sup>59</sup>

Although he acknowledged the superiority of the ‘masters of song’ from the northern hemisphere, Long was perhaps the first senior educationist in Australia to include a range of Australian poetry in prescribed reading texts for primary schools. With some exceptions, the verse he chose focussed on the landscape of the country rather than its history. Apart from predictions of future prosperity in the patriotic poems, and other poems expressing joy in the seasons and birds, many of the landscape poets did not appear to ‘cherish aspirations’ for the country. Several celebrated its particular features, particularly aspects of the bush and the rural scene, either ignoring urban life or wishing to retreat from it. Many of these poets contrasted a restricted and dull urban existence with the freedom and peace found in the open spaces of bush and plain. They appeared to accept their current circumstances with a resignation, tempered either by memories of happier times in the past, or by dreams of escaping to the freedom of the bush. In their poems, states of resignation and dreams of better circumstances in this life replace virtues of Victorian fortitude and hope for a better life in the hereafter that featured in nineteenth-century classroom poetry.

Despite Quinn’s message of *carpe diem* in ‘Spring Song’ and Hebblethwaite’s ‘Pull up the stakes and go!’ there was a dearth of activity in this poetry and little to inspire children in the manner of some of the narrative verse from overseas. Rather there was about the poetry an ‘Arnoldian melancholy’ a phrase used by Andrew Taylor in a different context (1987, 24). Although poets present the outdoor life in the bush in

a positive light, there is rarely a Wordsworthian 'visionary gleam' or 'sense sublime' in their response. Paul Kane suggests that much of this poetry is 'grounded in absence or negativity' (5). The prominence given to certain subjects and themes in the Australian poems Long featured in the Papers presented images of the country that conveyed a restricted and sometimes negative view of Australian life. And the continuing presence of this type of poetry in class readers and school poetry anthologies reinforced this view for the next three decades.

Long's reference to Evans's 'The Women of the West' perhaps best illustrates his view of the value of Australian poetry and poetry in general: the presentation of vivid pictures of settings and events accompanied by some moral or didactic message regarded as important for young people (Fig. 9). Such poetry fostered the view that this art form was divorced from some of the realities and exigencies of current life, and that its purpose was to convey serious moral and social themes in accord with Matthew Arnold's 'higher' and 'formative' purposes. And the differences in subject matter and style between the prose and poetry contents in many of the class readers considered in this study confirm this view. Prose conveyed facts and the reality of the every day; poetry was vatic and inspirational or consoling and restorative. What is important about the considerable quantity and variety of poetry in the *School Papers*, however, is that it gave Tasmanian children access to a range of poetry, both traditional and contemporary, representing the accepted poetic canon and that evolving within Australia, to which they had had no easy access previously. To some extent, their access to such a variety of poetic themes and styles was again restricted when the Department prescribed more conservative class readers in the second decade of the century.

# THE SCHOOL PAPER.

FOR CLASSES V. AND VI. (1909).

No. 38.]

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Publication as a newspaper.]

HOBART.

[JULY, 1909.

## THE WOMEN OF THE WEST.

The West, places far away from towns. The term used in Queensland (where the poem was written) for the out-back country.

Mansion, house of considerable size or pretension.

Over-looked, held dear.

Bankment, for embankment, structure of earth, gravel, &c., raised to carry a railway, hold water back, or for other such purpose.

1. They left the vine-wreathed cottage  
and the mansion on the hill,  
The houses in the busy streets where  
life is never still,  
The pleasures of the city, and the  
friends they cherished best :  
For love, they faced the wilderness—  
the Women of the West.

2. The roar, and rush, and fever of the  
city died away.  
And the old-time joys and faces—  
they were gone for many a day :  
In their place, the tinkling coach-  
wheel, or the creaking bullock  
chains,  
O'er the everlasting sameness of the  
never-ending plains.

3. In the slab-built, zinc-roofed home-  
stead of some lately taken run,  
In the tent beside the bankment of  
a railway just begun,  
In the huts on new selections, in the  
camps of man's unrest,  
On the frontiers of the nation, live  
the Women of the West.

4. The red sun robs their beauty, and,  
in weariness and pain.  
The slow years steal the nameless  
grace that never comes again :  
And there are hours men cannot soothe,  
and words men cannot say—  
The nearest woman's face may be a  
hundred miles away.

5. The wide bush holds the secrets of  
their longing and desires  
When the white stars in reverence  
light their holy altar fires.

—Abridged from *The Secret Key and Other Verses*, by GEORGE ESSEX EVANS,  
an Australian poet, born in 1863.

Price 1d.

Lurching, rolling or swaying suddenly to one side.

Frontier, the border of the settled and cultivated part of the country.

Reverence, great respect and esteem mingled with affection.

Sacrifice, giving up of something for the sake of something else.

Dignity, nobleness ; excellence.



GEORGE ESSEX EVANS.

And silence, like the touch of God,  
sinks deep into the breast—  
Perchance He hears and understands  
the Women of the West.

6. For them, no trumpet sounds the call,  
no post plies his arts—  
They only hear the beating of their  
gallant, loving hearts.  
But they have sung with silent lives  
the songs all songs above—  
The holiness of sacrifice, the dignity  
of love.

Fig. 9. 'The Women of the West'. Tasmanian School Paper V and VI.

## Tables

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### Poets and poems in the *Tasmanian School Journal*

POET	POEM	ISSUE	PRIOR ENTRY
'A.G.G.'	'Compensations'	March 1903	
Bingham, Clifton	'Remembered Best of All'	Feb. 1903	
Bonar, Horatius	'Live Thy Creed'	Sept. 1902	
Brigham, Madeline	'The Higher Life'	July 1902	
Cary, Phoebe	'Our Heroes'	March 1903	
Channing, Grace	'The Wind'	Sept. 1902	
Cooper, George	'A Boy's Promise'	Aug. 1902	
'F.L.'	'Now and Then'	July 1903	
Graves, J. Woodcock	'Truganini'	Dec. 1901	
Hemans, Felicia	'Casabianca'	April 1902	AR 2; RR IV
Holmes, Oliver W.	'Sun and Shadow'	March 1902	
Hunt, Leigh	'Abou Ben Adhem'	June 1903	AR 4
Longfellow, H.W.	'A Christmas Carol'	Dec. 1901	
	'Children'	Sept. 1902	
Lowell, James R.	'They are slaves'	May 1903	
Ruskin, John	'Awake! Awake!'	June 1902	
'T.R.T.'	'What Tommy Tried'	Jan. 1903	
Taylor, Alfred	'Sentinel Jim's Dog'	Nov. 1901	
	'The Earthquake'	May 1902	
Whittier, J.G.	'A Christmas Message'	Dec. 1901	
	'Disarmament'	Feb. 1902	
'Wild Cherry' (Woodbury)	'Influence'	Nov. 1902	

Poets and poems highlighted are those represented in the sample of nineteenth-century school readers examined in this study.

AR = *Australian School Reader*; RR = *Royal Reader*

Poets and poems in the *Tasmanian History Readers II-V*

POET	POEM	READER	PRIOR REFERENCE
Anon	'Robin Hood & Allen-A-Dale' 'Sir Lancelot du Lak'	II III	
<b>Byron, Lord</b>	<b>'Waterloo, 1815'</b>	V	<i>AR 5 (B); RR V</i>
<b>Campbell, Thomas</b>	<b>'Battle of the Baltic'</b>	V	<i>RR V</i>
Clough, A.H.	'Green Fields of England'	II	
Coleridge, C.J.	'Queen Margaret & the Robber' 'Queen Victoria's Promise'	II II	
Coleridge, D.M.	'Non Angli Sed Angeli Sunt' 'Who Shall be King?'	II II	
Drayton, Michael	'The Battle of Agincourt'	III	
'G.S.'	'Saladin's Gift'	II	
<b>Longfellow, H.W.</b>	'Santa Filomena' 'Sir Humphrey Gilbert' 'Discoverer of the North Cape' 'The Norman Baron'	V III IV IV	
<b>Macaulay</b>	<b>'The Armada'</b>	IV	<i>NAR 5</i>
Mitchell, Elizabeth H.	'The Battle of Trafalgar'	III	
Rodd, Rennell	'The Sea-king's Grave'	IV	
<b>Shakespeare</b>	<b>'Henry's Speech before Agincourt'</b>	IV	<i>RR VI; AR 5 (G); NAR 5</i>
Shirley, Edward	'The Eagles Have Flown!' 'Children of the Empire' 'A Legend of Athelney' 'Sir Philip Sidney'	II II III III	
<b>Tennyson, Alfred</b>	<b>'Wellington and Nelson, 1852'</b>	V	
Yonge, C.M.	'The Mother's Book'	III	

Poets and poems highlighted are those featured in the sample of readers prescribed for Tasmanian elementary schools in the nineteenth century.

*AR* = Australian School Reader; *NAR* = New Australian School Series; *RR* = Royal Reader.

## Poetry content in a sample of prescribed school readers and papers 1905-25

READER/PAPER	NO. OF POEMS	NO. OF LESSONS	% OF POETRY
Tasmanian Primer II	28	47	60
Tasmanian Reader I	23	52	44
Tasmanian Reader II	25	57	44
Paper Class III (1910)	68	127	54
Paper Class IV (1910)	50	100	50
Paper Class V/VI (1910)	61	130	47
Paper Class III/IV (1920)	70	151	46
Paper Class V/VI (1920)	64	113	57

## Poets and poetry taught in infant classes (prep – 2) 1905–50

POET	POEM	READER
Allen, Alice E.	'Autumn Leaves'	ER Nov. 1921
Aunt Effie	'Waves on the Sea-Shore'	Reader I
	'The Water-Mill'	Reader II
Bates, C.D.	'Thistledown'	ER Oct. 1921
Bates, Lois	'When Summer Smiles'	ER Nov. 1921
<b>Blake, William</b>	'Nurse's Song'	Reader I
Bradley, M.E.	'The Reason Why'	Reader I
<b>Browning, Robert</b>	'Good Morning'	Primer II
<b>Coleridge, S.</b>	'The Months'	Reader I
Coxhead, E.	'Dolly and Dick'	Reader II
'E.S.'	'A Donkey Race'	Reader I
Field, Eugene	'Japanese Lullaby'	ER Oct. 1921
Gale, Norman	'Out Early'	Reader II
	'Mustard and Cress'	Reader II
Gilman	'The Child's Wish in June'	Reader II
<b>Gould, Hannah</b>	'Jack Frost'	ER Nov. 1921
Grant, Maude M.	'The Indian Baby'	ER Sept. 1921
	'Twilight in the Cornfield'	ER Nov. 1921
Hughes, Rupert	'With a Primer'	Primer II
Johnson, M.	'What Each Thought'	Primer II
<b>Kipling, Rudyard</b>	'The Children's Song'	Primer II
	'The Seal's Lullaby'	ER Oct. 1921
	'The Liner, She's a Lady'	ER Dec. 1921
<b>Longfellow, H.W.</b>	'The Coming of the Corn'	ER Oct. 1921
	'Spring Signs'	ER Dec. 1921
	'The Rainbow'	ER Dec. 1921
Lovejoy, Mary	'Jack Frost'	ER Dec. 1921
MacDonald, George	'The Sun is Gone Down'	Reader I
	'Baby'	ER Oct. 1921
Mason, Veronica	'The Wattle'	ER Oct. 1921
	'Home'	ER Oct. 1921
Outhwaite, Ida R.	'The Great Big Night'	ER Dec. 1921
	'The Sea Fairies'	ER Dec. 1921
	'The Sun'	ER Dec. 1921
	'The Little Creek'	ER Dec. 1921
<b>Paterson, A.B.</b>	'Spring'	ER Dec. 1921
Pike, Cecily E.	'Jack Frost'	ER Oct. 1921
Pvke, Vincent	'The Old Flag'	Primer II; ED Dec. 1921
Pyle, Katherine	'The Sea Princess'	ER Sept. 1921
Rands, W.B.	'The Wonderful World'	ER Dec. 1921
Roberston, W.G.	'Day'	ER Nov. 1921
	'The Other Side of the Sky'	ER Nov. 1921
Rossetti, Christina	'Boats Sail on the Rivers'	Primer II; ER Sept. 1921
	'Who has seen the Wind?'	ER Nov. 1921
Setoun, Gabriel	'The World's Music'	Reader I
	'Jack Frost'	Reader I
	'The Hall Clock'	Reader II
<b>Shelley, P.B.</b>	'A Widow Bird'	Reader II
Shirley, Edward	'The Shepherd's Dog'	Reader I
	'The Kittens and the Robin'	Reader I
	'The See-Saw'	Reader II
	'The Ploughman'	Reader II
	'My Rose Tree'	Reader II
	'The Good Shepherd'	Reader II
<b>Stevenson, R.L.</b>	'Time to Rise'	Primer II
	'The Swing'	Primer II; ER Sept. 1921
	'Autumn Fires'	ER Nov. 1921



POET	POEM	READER
	'A Windy Night'	<i>Primer II</i>
	'Where Go the Boats?'	<i>ER</i> Sept. 1921
	'My Shadow'	<i>ER</i> Sept. 1921
Stodart, [?]	'Welcome to Spring'	<i>Reader II</i>
Taylor, Ann	'The Boy and the Sheep'	<i>Reader I</i>
Tennyson, Alfred	'Sweet and Low'	<i>Reader I</i>
	'Cradle Song'	<i>ER</i> Nov. 1921
	'The City Child'	<i>ER</i> Nov. 1921
Turner, Ethel	'That Rainbow Up There'	<i>ER</i> Dec. 1921
	'Where Does the Winter Go?'	<i>ER</i> Dec. 1921
Webber, James P.	'The Silver Moon'	<i>ER</i> Dec. 1921
Wordsworth, W.	'The Wild Wind'	<i>Reader II</i>
Wyman, Maud	'If I Knew'	<i>Reader I</i>

Poets highlighted are those who appeared in 19<sup>th</sup> century school readers. ER = *Educational Record*.

Poets included in the 1910 *School Papers III, IV, and V and VI* whose poems featured in the sample of nineteenth-century readers.

POET	POEM	PAPER	PRIOR ENTRY
Browning, Elizabeth	'Out in the Fields'	V&VI	
Browning, Robert	'Incident of the French Camp'	V&VI	
Burns, Robert	'Sights & Sounds of Winter'	III	
	'Auld Lang Syne'	IV	
	'For a' that and a' that'	V&VI	
Byron, Lord	'The Shipwreck'	V&VI	<i>AR 5 (B); RR V</i>
Campbell, Thomas	'The Harper'	III	<i>3<sup>rd</sup> Irish '45, '51, '78</i>
	'Ye Mariners of England'	III&IV	<i>3<sup>rd</sup> Irish '78; NAR 4; RR VI</i>
	'Departure of Immigrants, NSW'	V&VI	
Cook, Eliza	'The Heart'	III	
	'The First Voyage'	IV	<i>AR 5 (B&amp;G)</i>
Cowper, William	'The Poplar Field'	IV	
	'Receipt of my Mother's Picture'	V&VI	<i>AR 5 (G)</i>
Croly, George	'Retreat of French Army'	V&VI	<i>RR VI</i>
Emerson, R.W.	'Flower Chorus'	IV	
Gordon, Adam L.	'Drafting Cattle'	III	
Herrick, Robert	'To Blossoms'	V&VI	
Hugo, Victor	'The Poor Fisher Folk'	V&VI	<i>RR V</i>
Keats, John	'The Grasshopper & the Cricket'	V&VI	
Kendall, Henry	'June in Southern Australia'	V&VI	
Lawson, Henry	'Ballad of the Drover'	III	<i>NAR 4</i>
Longfellow, H.W.	'Excelsior'	IV	
	'The Sweet Singer'	IV	
	'Wreck of the Hesperus'	IV	<i>AR 4; NAR 3; RR IV</i>
	'The Arsenal at Springfield'	V&VI	
	'The Day is Done'	V&VI	
	'Santa Filomena'	V&VI	
Lowell, James Russell	'The Prince of Peace'	V&VI	
	'A Summer Storm'	V&VI	
Macaulay, Thomas B.	'The Last Buccaneer'	IV	
Mackay, Charles	'Tubal Cain'	IV	<i>AR 5 (B)</i>
	'Under the Holly Bough'	V&VI	
Milton, John	'Nativity Ode' (selected stanzas)	V&VI	
Moore, Thomas	'My Birthday'	V&VI	
	'My Mother'	V&VI	
Paterson, A.B.	'The Bush Life'	IV	
	'The Black Swans'	V&VI	
Payne, John H.	'Home, Sweet Home'	III	<i>RR IV</i>
Scott, Walter	'Love of Country'	IV	<i>3<sup>rd</sup> Irish '45, '78; NAR 4; RR IV</i>
	'Pibroch of Donuil Dhu'	IV	
Shakespeare	'Winter'	IV	
	'Adversity'	V&VI	
	'This royal throne of kings'	V&VI	<i>NAR 5</i>

POET	POEM	PAPER	PRIOR ENTRY
Southey, Robert	<b>'The Inchcape Rock'</b>	IV	<i>RR IV</i>
Taylor, Bayard	<b>'A Night with a Wolf'</b>	III	
Tennyson, Alfred	<b>'Break, Break, Break'</b> <b>'The Bugle Song'</b>	V&VI V&VI	
Whittier, J.G.	<b>'The Fishermen'</b>	IV	
Wordsworth, W.	<b>'Lucy Gray'</b> <b>'British Freedom'</b> <b>'The Daffodils'</b>	III V&VI V&VI	<i>NAR 2; RR II</i> <i>NAR 3</i>

Poets and poems highlighted are those who appeared in nineteenth-century class readers.  
*AR = Australian Reader; NAR = New Australian School Series; RR = Royal Reader*

Poets and poems from nineteenth-century class readers included in the 1920 *School Papers III and IV*, and *V and VI*

POET	POEM	PAPER	PRIOR ENTRY
Allingham, William	'A Holiday'	V&VI	
Browning, Robert	'Prospice'	V&VI	
Burns, Robert	'Rosebush and Linnet' 'Charity'	III&IV V&VI	
Byron, Lord	'Swimming' 'Estimation of a Dog'	III&IV III&IV	
Emerson, R.W.	'Forbearance'	V&VI	
Goldsmith, Oliver	'The Village Schoolmaster'	V&VI	
Holmes, O.W.	'The Chambered Nautilus'	V&VI	NAR 5
Howitt, Mary	'Use of Flowers'	III&IV	
Hunt, Leigh	'Lilies' 'Love The Neighbour'	III&IV V&VI	NAR 4; TSJ
Keats, John	'Chapman's Homer' 'To Autumn' 'Beauty'	V&VI V&VI V&VI	NAR 5 NAR 5
Kendall, Henry	'Bell-birds'	III&IV	
Kipling, Rudyard	'Children's Song of Empire'	III&IV	
Lawson, Henry	'The Lily and the Bee'	III&IV	
Longfellow, H.W.	'Children' 'Flowers' 'The Statue of Justice'	III&IV V&VI V&VI	TSJ Sept. 1902 AR 5 (B&G)
Lowell, James	'The Prince of Peace'	V&VI	
Mackay, Charles	'Be Thorough Boys' 'Cheer Boys, Cheer'	III&IV III&IV	
Paterson, A.B.	'The Explorers'	V&VI	
Payne, John H.	'Home Sweet Home'	V&VI	RR IV
Shakespeare	'Lines Worth Learning' 'Titania's Resting Place' 'Under the Greenwood Tree' 'Blow Blow Thou Winter Wind' 'Dirge' 'Fairy Songs' 'It was a Lover and his Lass' 'Morning Song to a Fair Lady' 'Winter' 'Quotations from the plays'	III&IV III&IV III&IV V&VI V&VI V&VI V&VI V&VI V&VI V&VI	
Shelley, P.B.	'Our Toil' 'Evening' 'On a Poet's Lips I Slept' 'The Pine Forest'	III&IV V&VI V&VI V&VI	NAR 5
Stevenson, R.L.	'The Wind'	III&IV	
Tennyson, Alfred	'Break, Break, Break' 'The Bugle Song' 'Freedom'	V&VI V&VI V&VI	
Trench, Herbert	'The Rule of God'	V&VI	RR V

Poems highlighted are those that appeared in nineteenth-century class readers.

AR = Australian Reader; NAR = New Australian School Series; RR = Royal Reader; TSJ = Tasmanian School Journal.

Poets in both the 1910 and 1920 issues of the *School Paper* who were not represented in the sample of nineteenth-century class readers

POET	POEMS
Bulwer-Lytton, E.	'Where is Briton's Home?' (1910) 'Time and Eternity' (1920)
Daley, Victor	'In the Australian Bush' (1910) 'Christmas in Australia' (1920) 'The Shepherds and Sheep' (1920)
Evans, George E.	'Australia' (1910) 'Britain, Mother of Nations' (1920) 'On the Plains' (1920)
Keble, John	'Our Work' (1910) 'The Book of Nature' (1920)
Kingsley, Charles	A Christmas Carol (1910) A Farewell (1920)
Rossetti, Christina	'Consider the Lilies ...' (1910) 'Uphill' (1920)
Stephens, Brunton J.	'An Australian Anthem' (1910) 'An Australian's Thanks' (1920) 'The Angel of the Doves' (1920)

Australian poets and poems in the monthly issues of the 1910 and 1920 *School Papers*.

POET	POEM(S)	PAPER
Aston, Tilly	'A Bird's Nest'	IV, 1910
Bayldon, Arthur	'A Bush Canary' 'Sunset'	V/VI, 1910 V/VI, 1920
Beck, Philip & F. Hume	'Australia: Vision and Wish'	V/VI, 1910
Brady, E.J.	'To Australian Seamen'	V/VI, 1910
Carleton, Caroline	'The Song of Australia'	III, 1910
Carmichael, Jennings	'A Spray of Wattle Blossom'	IV, 1910
Carter, Will	'The Wagtail'	III/IV, 1920
Cornstalk, Samuel	'The Butcher-bird's Song'	III/IV, 1920
Coutts, Christian	'An Australian Spring Day'	III, 1910
Cuthbertson, J.L.	'Sunrise in Victoria' 'At Cape Schanck'	IV, 1910 V/VI, 1910
Daly, Victor J.	'In The Australian Bush' 'Christmas in Australia' 'The Shepherd and the Sheep'	IV, 1910 V/VI, 1910 V/VI, 1920
Dennis, C.J.	'The Builders'	V/VI, 1920
Evans, George E.	'On The Plains' 'Australia' 'Britain, Mother of Nations'	III/IV, 1920 V/VI, 1910 V/VI, 1920
Gilmore, Mary	'The Australian'	V/VI, 1920
Gordon, Adam Lindsay	'The Sick Stockrider' (extract)	III, 1910
Heney, Thomas	'The Wild Duck'	V/VI, 1910
Howe, M. DeWolfe	'How Shall I Serve My Country?'	IV, 1910
Jerome, Helen	'Coming of Spring: A Suggestion'	III/IV, 1920
Kendall, Henry	'June in Southern Australia' 'Bell-birds'	V/VI, 1910 III/IV, 1920
Knowles, Marion	'A Fern-tree Gully'	V/VI, 1910
Lawson, Henry	'Ballad of the Drover'	III, 1910
Lawson, Will	'The Destroyer'	V/VI, 1920
Lee, Ida	'The Homestead'	IV, 1910
Long, R.H.	'The First Orchids'	V/VI, 1920
Lorimer, Philip D.	'The Butcher-bird'	III, 1910
Loughran, Edward	'To Australia'	V/VI, 1910
Mathew, John	'The Kookaburra' 'The Laughing Jackass' 'To a Brush Wattle-bird'	III/IV, 1920 IV, 1910 V/VI, 1920
McCrae, Hugh	'Lines from "Poets and Kings"'	V/VI, 1920
McNutt, Mollie	'A Song of the Bush'	V/VI, 1920
Meaden, J.W.	'To Victoria'	III, 1910
Meredith, Louisa	'Laughing Jackasses'	III, 1910
O'Dowd, Bernard	'Resurgent'	III/IV, 1920
Ogilvie, William	'For Mother' 'The Filling the Swamps'	IV, 1910 III/IV, 1920
O'Hara, John B.	'The Corn Song'	III, 1910
Paterson, A.B.	'The Bush Life' 'Black Swans' 'The Explorers'	IV, 1910 V/VI, 1910 V/VI, 1920
Pitt, Marie E.J.	'Bairnsdale' 'The Going of the Grey Geese'	III/IV, 1920 V/VI, 1920
Quinn, Roderick	'Spring Song'	III, 1910

POET	POEM(S)	PAPER
Searby, C.A.H.	'Is it True?'	III, 1910
Spielvogel, N.F.	'Our Gum-trees'	V/VI, 1910 V/VI, 1920
Stephens, J.Brunton	'An Australian's Thanks' 'An Australian Anthem' 'The Angel of the Doves'	III/IV, 1920 IV, 1910 V/VI, 1910
Sutherland, Alex.	'Australia to the Motherland' 'An Austral Sky'	V/VI 1920 V/VI 1920
Thomas, James	'To a Silver-eye'	III, 1910
Watkin, Edwin J.	'For King and Empire'	III, 1910
Welsh, Alex C.	'To a Black-and-White Fantail'	IV, 1910
White, H.J.	'The Captive Bird'	III, 1910
Williamson, Frank	'The Magpie's Song'	V/VI, 1910
Wright, David McKee	'A Sonnet of Welcome'	V/VI, 1920

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## Notes

<sup>1</sup> Page numbers for further quotations from Neale's *Report* in this section appear in the text, in parenthesis.

<sup>2</sup> Elsewhere in the *Report* Neale wrote: 'educationists do not now say "Knowledge is power." The modern form is, "Knowledge that can be used is power"' (47).

<sup>3</sup> Page numbers for further quotations from the *Course of Instruction* are placed in the text, in parenthesis.

<sup>4</sup> These quotations are taken from the article 'English Poetry from Children from Six to Ten' which appeared in the August and October editions of the 1907 *Education Record*: 70-1 and 91 respectively.

<sup>5</sup> The allusion to 'barbarians' is from Arnold's 'Culture and Anarchy' 200.

<sup>6</sup> Arnold made similar claims in his essay on the French poet Maurice de Guérin: 'poetry is interpretative both by having *natural magic* in it, and by having *moral profundity*. In both ways it illuminates man; it gives him a satisfying sense of reality; it reconciles him with himself and the universe' ('The Highest Powers' 65).

<sup>7</sup> McCoy, from New South Wales, and Brooks, from South Australia, were also advocates of the New Education. McCoy had been influenced by the leadership of Peter Board (Director of NSW Education Department). Brooks had been recruited by Neale in 1908 and supported Neale's approach to education. See Phillips 110 and 171.

<sup>8</sup> Some of Johnson's language here ('faculties', 'powers') echoes that of Matthew Arnold. One book from his personal library that Johnson donated to the Teacher Training College in 1930 was Huxley's collection of Matthew Arnold's *Thoughts on Education*.

<sup>9</sup> Johnson's co-editor of *Prose and Verse: Selections from English Literature, 1790-1850* was Inspector C.E. Fletcher. Johnson and Fletcher compiled their anthology of both prose and poetry believing there was a 'reasonable demand [...] for more unity in the study of literature' (Preface).

<sup>10</sup> Articles on the first five of these poets were published in the April/May, June, July, August and September/October issues of the 1899 *New Zealand Journal of Education*. That on Francis Thompson appeared in the November 1904 issue of the *Journal*.

<sup>11</sup> These two articles appeared in the June 1904 and July 1903 issues of the *Journal* respectively.

<sup>12</sup> The editor of the *Record* noted that their success 'reflects the greatest credit not only on Tasmania, but also on the Philip Smith Training College [...]' The significance of their success was long remembered and was celebrated publicly at a ceremony marking the 21<sup>st</sup> anniversary of the College's foundation (*ER* June 1927, 89). Rockwell's opening stanza is representative of the style of both poems:

Where the heart of the South is sleeping,  
Deep 'mid the falling snows,  
At his head wreath the kingly laurel,  
And over his heart a rose,  
And twine, with a touch that is tender,  
'Mid his own loved English may,  
One green gum-leaf from the South-land,  
And a golden wattle spray.

Kate White records one stanza from Edith Burnell's 'A Reverie' that was published in the *Tasmanian Trainee* (45). White also quotes from a letter Johnson wrote to Edith's parents commending her work as a student teacher and her achievement in the poetry competition (46).



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<sup>13</sup> See Morris for further tributes to Johnson's knowledge of English literature and his ability to 'inspire enthusiastic as well as critical appreciation of literary achievement' (40-1).

<sup>14</sup> The tribute was a special unpaginated inset in this edition of the *Educational Record*. In a paper written several years after his death, Amy Rowntree provided further details about Johnson's early life and a tribute to his work as principal of the Teachers' College:

The late revered principal of our Teachers' College was, till the age of twelve, an ordinary little boy in a New Zealand country school; ordinary, at least to his teacher. When the lad was twelve an accident occurred which freed John from the dull routine of the school and gave him leisure to discover the beauty and mystery of the printed page. So fiercely burned John's newly-awakened desires that the doctor in charge of the hospital was forced to set a limit to the boy's reading hours. "Johnno" has often told me how that accident changed him from a prospective farmer to a scholar and master [...]. At the age of eighteen, he came under the influence of a scholarly divine of the old Scottish school. From the rich treasure-house of this fine old doctor's mind the boy was fed on the glories of English literature; from this long-dead hand he received the torch with which the "Johnno" of later years illumined the same path for us. (*ER* July 1935, 108)

<sup>15</sup> An introductory note to the article reads:

The following paper was recently read by an ex-student of the Training College at the usual weekly meeting of the staff at his school. It is published, with all faults, to indicate the character of the work that is being done at the staff meetings in this particular school. The enthusiasm and intellectual activity displayed by the master and staff at this school are reflected in the work of the children.

<sup>16</sup> The article was reprinted from the USA journal *The Public Speaking Review*. Bassett was on the staff of Stanford University, California.

<sup>17</sup> The journal's masthead described the paper thus: 'A Monthly Illustrated Paper of Useful Information for Boys and Girls at School and at Home'. The journal was printed at the 'Tasmanian News' Office, Collins Street, Hobart.

<sup>18</sup> According to the historian Michael Roe, Alfred Taylor 'received little formal education' (246). He would have read the *Irish Readers* during his schools years in Tasmania in the 1850s.

<sup>19</sup> The boy in 'Isn't He Queer?' prefers personal pleasures to study and household responsibilities:

He doesn't like study: it weakens his eyes;  
But the right sort of book will create a surprise  
Let it be about Indians, pirates, or bears  
And he's lost for the day to all other affairs.  
By sunlight or gaslight his vision is clear.  
Now isn't that queer? (June 1903: 138)

<sup>20</sup> These reading prescriptions are taken from the Department's 1911 *Course of Instruction for the Primary Schools*. This was the first publication of the complete course of study for primary schools, sections of which had been published separately from 1905. The *Course of Instruction* also prescribed 'approved' supplementary readers for classes 1 to 6. These supplementary readers were not specified, except for Fourth class (*The Tasmanian History of Australian Exploration*). Supplementary reading in Sixth class was prescribed as 'a simple English classic in prose or poetry'.

<sup>21</sup> A notice in the *Educational Record* at that time announced their availability and stated that the readers were Tasmanian editions of readers 'compiled for English children'. Teachers were advised that some of the references to England would need explanation (October 1907, 89).

<sup>22</sup> The *Tasmanian History Readers* were readers published in London by Nelson as part of the *Royal School Series*, with the title *Highroads of History*. The Tasmanian Education Department gained permission to reprint them for use in Tasmanian schools.

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<sup>23</sup> The large number of *School Papers* made it necessary to analyse the contents of a sample only. Years 1910 and 1920 were chosen for the sample in order to observe changes in poetry selection over the decade. The analysis of the papers for 1910 is based on the indexes to the papers for the relevant classes published as supplements to the *School Paper Class III*, March 1911, *School Paper Class IV*, March 1911 and *School Paper Classes V and VI*, March 1911. By 1920, the *School Papers* for III and IV were combined, and the 1920 contents for both III and IV and V and VI were published in the December 1920 issue of the corresponding papers.

<sup>24</sup> W.C. Morris was also a member of this first intake of student teachers. He remembers Rowntree as a 'quiet little girl' who was to become 'probably one of Tasmania's most brilliant women' (48).

<sup>25</sup> Amy Rowntree was born in 1885. She began her teaching career as a Pupil Teacher at the Battery Point School in 1902 and was among the first intake of student teachers at the newly established Training College in 1906. She taught in schools at Geeveston, Beaconsfield, Burnie and Hobart. In 1911, the Director selected her to attend the Blackfriars Training School in Sydney for two years. In 1913 she was appointed Mistress of Method in charge of the Infant section of the Elizabeth Practising School, Hobart. Amy Rowntree completed a BA degree in 1919 and an MA in 1921. She was appointed Inspector of Schools in 1919. See Grant Rodwell 471-2.

<sup>26</sup> Veronica Mason's collection of poems, *I Heard a Child Singing*, was published in 1907 and a second edition was printed in 1909 (Morris Miller).

<sup>27</sup> The analysis of the poetry contained in the *Primers* and first and second books of *The Tasmanian Readers* is based on early editions of these texts. The *Primers* were revised several times during the next decades, mainly to accommodate changing approaches to the teaching of reading skills. The two *Readers* were part of the *Royal School Series*, published in England and reprinted, with permission, by the Education Department.

<sup>28</sup> The relevant line from Stevenson's poem, as printed in the *Primer*, is: 'Rivers and trees and castles and all [...]'. This may be a misprint, because the line as printed in *A Child's Garden of Verses* (1994) is 'Rivers and trees and cattle and all [...]'.

<sup>29</sup> Rowntree devoted a whole lecture to the value of the traditional nursery rhymes, both as significant folk-lore and as exercises in rhyme, rhythm and word sounds. It is significant that she gave similar value to the modern nursery songs and rhymes of Rossetti and Ida Outhwaite. Rossetti's nursery rhymes were published in *Sing-song* (1872). Outhwaite's nursery rhymes were included in her *A Bunch of Wild Flowers* (1933).

<sup>30</sup> Comments on Rowntree's beliefs about poetry are taken from the lecture notes of one of her students, Margaret Lonergan (née Pill), who trained as an infant teacher in 1945.

<sup>31</sup> Paterson's 'Spring' is the fifth stanza of his 'Old Australian Ways' (*Collected Verse* 1956, 155).

<sup>32</sup> *I Heard a Child Singing* 14.

<sup>33</sup> Musgrave notes that the *School Paper* was used in schools in Western Australia and Fiji, as well as in Tasmania ('Readers in Victoria' 2).

<sup>34</sup> These percentages are based on separate prose and poetry items in the various papers, not on word count.

<sup>35</sup> An analysis of the poetry in all issues of the *School Papers* from 1906 to 1926 is beyond the scope of this study. Issues of the papers other than those of 1910 and 1920 consulted for this purpose included those for class III 1912, 1914, class IV 1906, classes III & IV 1923, 1924, classes V & VI 1908, 1911, 1912, 1914, 1917, 1918, 1919, 1921, 1922, 1923 and the special January editions of the *School Papers* for 1912, 1914, 1915, 1916 and 1917. These January editions contained a series of poems grouped for junior, middle and senior primary classes.

<sup>36</sup> The titles of the poems in the 1910 *School Papers* are those listed in the supplements to the class III, IV, V&VI *School Papers*, published in March 1911.

<sup>37</sup> This is not Kendall's poem, but comes from *The Australian Progressive Songster*.

<sup>38</sup> This information is drawn from lists of the contents of the 1920 class III&IV and class V&VI *School Papers*, published in the December 1920 issues.

<sup>39</sup> Poems by Campbell in other issues of the *School Papers* included 'The Last Man' and 'The Battle of Hohenlinden'\* (1908), 'The Battle of the Baltic' (1911), 'The Rainbow' and 'The Soldier's Dream'\* (1912), and 'The Parrot'\* and 'Lord Ullin's Daughter'\* (1926). Those by Cowper included 'Alexander Selkirk\*', 'Toll for the Brave' and 'The Cricket'\* (1906), 'Boedicea'\* (1907), 'Captain Cook' (1911) and 'The Nightingale and the Glowworm' (1926). Scott's 'Christmas in the Motherland' and 'Rosabelle' (1911), 'Young Lochinvar' and 'Lullaby to an Infant Chief'\* (1926). The titles asterisked indicate poems that were included in the nineteenth-century sample of school readers.

<sup>40</sup> Montgomery's 'Home'\* (1906) and 'Friends'\* (1921), Moore's 'The Minstrel Boy'\* (1906) and 'Beneath the Moonbeam's Smile' (1907) and Hemans's 'The Name of England' (1906), 'The Pilgrim Fathers'\* (1912) and 'The Homes of England'\* (1926). The titles asterisked indicate poems that were included in the nineteenth-century sample of school readers.

<sup>41</sup> Poems by Kendall included 'September in Australia' (1908 and 1912), 'Australia' (1912) and 'The Warrigal' (1921). Those by Kipling included 'Recessional' (1906 and 1923), 'The Coastwise Lights' (1908) and 'If' (1923). Lawson's entries included 'The Fire at Ross's Farm' (1921), 'A Song of the Wind' (1925) and 'The Lights of Cobb and Co' (1926). Mackay's poems were 'Daily Work' (1907), 'A Song of England' (1912) and 'The Miller of Dee' (1925). Stevenson's poems included 'The Print of Olden Wars' (1912), 'Foreign Lands' (1921), 'The Sun's Travels' and 'Bed in Summer' (1923) and 'How to Sing or Read' (1924).

<sup>42</sup> These two poems by Howitt appeared in the *School Papers* for 1925 and 1921 respectively. 'The Coming of Spring' was included in the first edition of the *Tasmanian Reader* (1933).

<sup>43</sup> Further references to the *School Papers* and quotations from their contents are identified by class, year and page number, and appear in the text, in parenthesis.

<sup>44</sup> Waterworth's poems for the respective years were 'The Mountain Torrent' and 'Men of Anzac'. Waterworth taught in Tasmanian schools from 1902 until 1936. His collection of poetry, *Songs and Sonnets* was published in Queenstown (Tasmania) in 1911. He frequently composed verses for popular tunes that were performed at school concerts. One such poem, titled 'Tasmania', concludes with the couplet: 'Tasmania, fair island, my song is of thee, / Enthroned in thy splendour, and ringed by the sea.' His sonnet 'Culture' was written in response to the 1934 J.A. Johnson Memorial Lecture, and published in the November 1934 issue of the *Educational Record* (158). See also his earlier sonnet, 'The Pilot', a tribute to J.A. Johnson, written in 1920 and published in *The Philpian* (December 1920): 7.

<sup>45</sup> Musgrave confirms that contributions to the *School Paper* were invited and that by the 1930s stories and poems were commissioned ('Readers in Victoria' 4).

<sup>46</sup> Morris Miller lists 40 of these in his *Bibliography*. Twenty-eight are also featured in Wilde, Hooton and Andrews (1991). The 7 poets not acknowledged by either of these texts were most likely local amateur poets who submitted poems to the editor. Christian Coutts, a teacher at Maryborough School Victoria, was probably one such local poet. His poems 'Butterflies' and 'Jack Frost at Work' were included in the 1912 and 1914 *School Papers*. Claude Searby was a teacher at the Melbourne Continuation School whose 'Lazy and Busy' was published in the 1907 class 3 papers. The inclusion of the poem 'A Rat and a Mouse' by Horace Broomfield, a Tasmanian boy aged 7, in one of the 1930 issues of the papers indicates that children were encouraged to submit poems to the editor.

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<sup>47</sup> John Mathew's 'The Kookaburra' (1920) and 'The Laughing Jackass' (1910) are the same poem with different titles. 'The Laughing Jackass' consists of only two verses of the complete poem.

<sup>48</sup> The correct title of Aston's poem is 'Bird-nesting: A Song from Sorrento'. On occasions, Long changed the titles of poems or created new titles for extracts from longer works.

<sup>49</sup> 'Green Spears' is Long's title for the poem. The correct title of the poem is 'Turn to the Grass'.

<sup>50</sup> These excerpts from Mason's poem are taken from the poet's collection *I Heard a Child Singing* (48-9). The poem is listed in the contents page of the 3/4 *School Papers* for 1925, but I have been unable to sight the particular issue of the paper in which the poem appeared.

<sup>51</sup> These excerpts from Mason's poem 'Home' are taken from her collection *I Heard a Child Singing* (9-14). The poem is listed in the contents page of the class 3/4 papers for 1924.

<sup>52</sup> Long's poem is listed in the contents of papers 3/4 in 1924 and 1926. These quotations from 'Boobook Owl' are taken from his *Verses* (21).

<sup>53</sup> Elliott examines this poem along similar lines (211-13).

<sup>54</sup> Long expanded the title for this poem; Helen Jerome's title is 'A Suggestion'.

<sup>55</sup> 'A Bush Scene' is an extract from Neilson's 'Heart of Spring'. The quotations are *The Poems of Shaw Neilson* (116).

<sup>56</sup> 'Bush Delights' is an extract from Fytte I of Gordon's 'Ye Wearie Wayfarer'.

<sup>57</sup> Wagner's poem also appeared in *School Papers* in 1920 and 1926 and in two editions of the fourth *Tasmanian Reader*. The quotations are taken from the 1947 edition of the reader (65).

<sup>58</sup> The quotations from Hebblethwaite's poem are from the 1940 edition of the third *Tasmanian Reader* (184).

<sup>59</sup> Evans's poem was included in the 1909 *School Papers V&VI*.

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### **3: POETRY IN PRIMARY SCHOOLS 1905 –1950 (ii)**



William McCoy resigned as Director of Education in 1919 to take up a similar position in South Australia. During his ten years as Director in Tasmania, McCoy had consolidated Neale's work, including the publication of the complete *Course of Instruction* (1911) based on New Education ideals. Reading texts prescribed for that course – the *School Papers*, *Tasmanian History Readers*, *Primers* and *Reading Books I and II* – remained unchanged throughout this period. McCoy retained Neale's school inspection procedures, but with increased emphasis on aspects of teaching methodology, including those approaches to the teaching of poetry discussed in the previous chapter.<sup>1</sup> Monthly issues of the *Educational Record* were the official channel for communicating administrative and professional instructions to schools. These and the Director's annual reports to parliament were the major public documents on government education during the period. Government secondary schools operated in the three regions of the state. Hobart and Launceston High Schools, established in 1913, and Devonport High school, established in 1919, provided access to secondary schooling for all students who passed the Qualifying Examination during the final term of their grade 6 year.<sup>2</sup> The teacher-training program at the Hobart Teachers' College was well established, entry and training standards were defined and student examination results published annually.<sup>3</sup> By 1912, close to one hundred students were enrolled at the College and these numbers were maintained during the decade (*ER* January 1912, 109-11).<sup>4</sup> In addition to their professional training, matriculated teacher-trainees studied degree subjects at the university, and their results were published annually in the *Record* (*ER* January 1915, 19).

George Vickery Brooks assumed the position of Director of Education in October 1919. Neale had recruited Brooks from South Australia in 1906 and appointed him First Assistant at the Battery Point Model School. From there he was appointed Master of Method at Elizabeth Practising School, a position he held until becoming Director of Education. Phillips suggests that Brooks differed from Neale and McCoy because he 'subscribed to no theory of education', and was a practical and pragmatic leader who was willing 'to consult, share ideas and experiences and arrive at decisions collectively' (171-2). One of Brooks's first actions as Director was to revise the 1911 *Course of Study* and to announce that primary school courses would be reviewed subsequently at five yearly intervals. Brooks's approach to this task

demonstrated his collaborative leadership style. In 1921 he appointed a series of subject committees to undertake the work, and advised teachers:

In connection with this work the Department is anxious that *all* teachers should have an opportunity of expressing any opinions they may have with regard to any part of the syllabus. To this end teachers are asked to set out as concisely as possible any suggested alterations and forward these to the convener of the committee for that subject no later than 11<sup>th</sup> June. (*ER* May 1921, 83)

The sub-committee for English comprised J.A. Johnson (Principal of the Teachers' College), Inspector Davis and four teachers, T. Blaikie (convener), A. Buttsworth, W.W. Howard and Miss E. Rogers. It was their task to consider teachers' suggestions and draw up a proposed scheme of work for the subject (*ER* May 1921, 83). All subject committees completed their work by the end of that year and the new primary *Course of Instruction* was trialled in schools during 1922 and 1923, before its publication and full implementation in 1924.<sup>5</sup>

### ***New Courses of Instruction***

The 1924 *Course of Instruction for the Primary Schools* set out prescriptions for the teaching of English under four headings, 'Language', 'Reading and Recitation', 'Spelling' and 'Writing'. No changes were made to the prescribed reading texts for the preparatory class and classes one to four, but the *Pacific Readers V* and *VI* replaced the *School Papers* as class readers for the two senior primary classes. The *Tasmanian History Readers* continued as prescribed reading texts for classes two to six. Time allocated to the teaching of poetry each week remained the same as that in *ols* for *several* decades because of *ts* were made to the number of lines of poetry to be memorised.<sup>6</sup> Teachers now were given less latitude about the number of lines children were expected to memorise, the words 'at least' prefacing the numbers specified for each class.<sup>7</sup> These increased from 80 to 100 lines a year for preparatory classes, from 100 to 112 for the first class, and by 20 in most other classes, making the new requirements 120 lines for second class, 140 for third class, 160 for fourth class, 170 for fifth class and 200 for sixth class.

By including the course requirements for poetry under the heading 'Reading and Recitation', the 1924 *Course of Instruction* appeared to reinforce the importance of memorising and reciting poetry. This impression was allayed somewhat, but not entirely, by the comments about the teaching of the subject included in the 'Notes'

addressed to teachers. Infant teachers were advised to include poetry in each week's thematic work and to give priority to increasing proficiency in speech. This proficiency included 'the necessary culture to understand and enjoy the best in literature', which at this level was to begin with the 'earliest classics – in verse the Nursery Rhyme' where 'the child's ear is being attuned to the beat of verse, the jingle of rhyme' (60-1). In what could be a precursor of the discriminatory function of reading in the 1940s, teachers of infant classes were told that the poetry they taught had to inculcate

a taste for a vigour of action and a simplicity and directness of style, which should form a preventative to the growth of that love of the mawkish and exaggerated which is so to be deplored. (61)

Teachers had to introduce a new poem to classes each fortnight and this was to be 'studied' (64). In choosing poems, they were not to 'overstrain the principle of correlation' with other subjects, but to focus on poems of beauty that would 'appear more beautiful to the child with advancing years and attain their full significance in adult life'. They were encouraged to select poems for study and recitation that appealed to them personally, of which they felt 'the beauty of the language, vividness and charm of imagery, the message of the thought and the appeal to the emotions' (65). The 'Notes' recommended approaches to the method of introducing the poem to infant classes, including the use of pictures and the copying and memorising of the poem by the pupils. The most detailed instructions were devoted to the recitation of poetry:

During the recitation of the poem children should be led to see that the full beauty can only be given if attention is paid to richness of vowel tones and clearness of enunciation. Types of vowels and consonants, with their feeling tones, should be studied. Artificiality and overstraining of enunciation are, however, to be discouraged. Beauty of expression should arise from the child's desire to convey through speech the emotional tone of the passages rendered. Pattern recitation should disappear, the children being trained to see that many voice interpretations of the poem may be given, and that he should contribute one original to himself and his idea of the phrases of the verse. (65)

The main theme of the 'Notes' on the teaching of poetry in the middle and upper primary classes was the development of children's appreciation of poetry as art, concerned not with things of 'utility and practical end', but 'with all things beautiful in nature and in the works of man' (73):

What does poetry offer to the teacher as a means of introducing his pupils to this domain of beauty? Many things may be specified: take, for example, rhythm. To appreciate rhythm in movement and in language marks a decided advance in culture. The “measured cadence” of verse has a unique power in leading the learner to a knowledge of the divine harmony that breathes through all things. (73)

Rhythm was the only instance given in these ‘Notes’ of the ‘many things’ claimed to foster children’s appreciation of poetry and touch them with Milton’s ‘harmony divine’.<sup>8</sup> And in this instance, teachers had to do more than simply provide ‘a rough idea’ of rhythm’s effect, but actually demonstrate ‘the nature of the mechanism underlying the poet’s work’. Just as the student of music ‘must give due attention to musical technique, so the student of poetry cannot neglect to note the laws of rhythm, and to mark the effects of alliteration and rhyme’ (73).

The possible tension between studying the application of such ‘laws’ in poetry and responding to poetry as art was recognised, but not completely resolved, in the next paragraph where references to Wordsworth reinforced the mystery of the process of appreciation:

The main object of the study is to get the point of view of the poet, to see as he saw. The teacher must be careful not to burden his teaching with too many “meanings” and references. Instead of a living organism he may find a corpse buried under the weight of his commentary. The intellectual side of his task must not, however, be neglected: “What is the meaning of [...]?” has a place in the lesson, but it is a very minor one. “The mechanism by which we appreciate is probably subtler than those by which we perform most other mental acts [...]. Appreciation, both aesthetic and moral, seems often to come as a subtle dawn or a sudden flash”. (73-4)<sup>9</sup>

The ‘Notes’ concluded with advice about the recitation of poetry (including ‘reading aloud with expression’) and the type of poetry appropriate for children:

Young children require a story: elder ones, the heroic with the abundant life of movement and activity. Didactic and descriptive works must be relegated at the earliest to the adolescent period, and with limitations even at that age. Having chosen the right poem, the teacher has to rely largely on his own “divine vitality” to give the teaching life and reality. (74)

Many of the ideas in the ‘Notes’ for middle and upper classes were based on, or drawn directly from, Frank Hayward’s *The Lesson in Appreciation* (1915), a text that examined at length the appreciation of both poetry and music as art forms.<sup>10</sup> And from this time, ‘appreciation’ became an important concept for inspectors when

assessing poetry teaching in primary schools. As the above passage suggests, teachers' work in this area of the curriculum extended beyond the purely intellectual; they were 'divine' agents fostering children's appreciation of poetry's 'aesthetic and moral' qualities (74).

Within two years of the publication of the 1924 *Course*, planning was underway for its revision. Revised programs were published in at least one subject during 1927, and a change in the compulsory class reading books was implemented before the new course had been published (*ER* February 1928, 47).<sup>11</sup> In October 1928, teachers were advised that the new *Course of Instruction* would operate from the beginning of the following year and that classes would be named 'grades' from that time (*ER* October 1928, 130).<sup>12</sup> The accompanying list of 'Supplementary Readers' for each grade and recommended reference books and materials for teachers were evidence of the thorough preparation for the new course (130-1). The texts for teacher reference included 13 on aspects of the teaching of English, among them Chubb's *The Teaching of English*, T.G. Tucker's *The Judgement and Appreciation of Literature*, A. Haddow's *On the Teaching of Poetry*, George Sampson's *English for the English*, Marjorie Gullan's *Spoken Poetry in Schools* and *The Teaching of English in England* (the Newbolt Report). This was the first syllabus document in Tasmanian education to include more than one or two teacher reference texts and to promote their value for teachers.

In his preface to the 1929 *Course of Instruction for the Primary Schools*, George Brooks claimed that '[t]heory and practical experience have been combined in the compilation of the courses', and expressed confidence that they would 'help bring our schools and our teaching more in line with modern ideals of education' (5).<sup>13</sup> He stated that teaching methodology was the 'teacher's prerogative', but at the same time revealed his commitment to particular approaches, such as memory work and drill methods, as essential features of daily routine in schools (6-7). Brooks devoted considerable attention to the teaching of English in order to illustrate the importance of teachers keeping in touch 'with the latest and more advanced thought on the science and art of teaching'. He noted that the books recommended for teachers' professional reading (including those mentioned above) had been 'sources of helpful inspiration' to the writers of the course, and concluded his remarks by affirming that

the 'work in our schools is likely to lag hopelessly behind the spirit of the age unless we keep ourselves in close touch with this extensive professional literature' (7).

The new *Course of Instruction* retained the *Tasmanian Primers* for the preparatory classes, but prescribed a new series of readers, *The British Empire Readers*, for grades 1 – 6. The *Tasmanian History Readers* were again prescribed for grades 1 – 6. The time allocated for the teaching of poetry did not change, but a feature of the compulsory reading program in this course was the inclusion of nominated supplementary readers, ranging from 'stories, myths and legends' in the preparatory grade to 'at least three approved supplementary readers' in grade 6 (24, 33). No collections of poetry were included in the list of approved texts, although 'Tales from Tennyson's Idylls of the King' was recommended for grade 6 pupils (22).

Details of the English course were presented under four headings, 'Literature', 'Language', 'Spelling and Dictation' and 'Writing'.<sup>14</sup> The literature section comprised 'Reading' and 'Poetry' sections. Preparatory and grade 1 pupils were expected to 'study' about 'thirty simple passages from the poets' and learn between 20 and 50 lines of these. Recommended activities included dramatising nursery rhymes (24) and copying poems in workbooks (26). Poems recommended for grade 2 pupils were 'simple narrative tales of home and nature, or of childish romance and fairyland'. These pupils had to learn 160 lines during the year and display 'an intelligent knowledge' of them (27). Pupils in grades 3 and 4 were expected to learn an increased number of lines of poetry (200 and 240 lines respectively) 'carefully selected for their literary merit' and to demonstrate 'intelligent' knowledge of them. In these grades pupils could be allowed 'sometimes to select their own poems' (29). Grade 5 and 6 pupils were expected to learn 240 lines of poetry by the end of the year, and teachers were to encourage 'a sense of simple rhythm' and a knowledge of 'simple figures of speech as they occur, viz., simile, metaphor, personification, alliteration, antithesis' (31).

The 'Notes' on poetry for teachers of infant classes consisted of a paragraph on values gained from memorising poetry, quoted directly from Chubb's *The Teaching of English*. Chubb champions the value of memorising as 'storing the mind with the priceless treasure of the noblest thoughts and feelings that have been uttered by the

race' (12).<sup>15</sup> These 'impart a tone to one's spiritual system for life, rich and pure enough to out-sing all baser and cruder songs and to set the pitch of character'. Chubb refers to Matthew Arnold's essay 'The Study of Poetry' and writes that the teacher 'can perform no worthier office for the child than to set singing in its mind, in order to fashion the norm of his taste, poems and pieces selected with a fine scrupulousness'. Nevertheless, he insists that the poetry repertoire for study should be 'eclectic':

we must draw upon the humorous and whimsical as well as upon the serious and pathetic (a limited supply of that); upon the nonsensical and the doggerel as well as upon the heroic and stately. And we should err if we do not sound high above all minor tones the note of joy, gladness, exuberance. (12)

The 'Notes' on the teaching of poetry for grades 3 – 6 considered approaches to the recitation and appreciation of 'choice extracts from the masters of literature' (15). Recitation and oral reading were aids to appreciation. The impact of a poem read clearly with expression and feeling could be such that 'it is never forgotten' (16). Before memorising a poem, pupils had to be taught well 'in order to gain complete understanding and appreciation of the work':

No pains should be spared to gain success in this part of the work [...]. [W]e understand the work of an author when we enter in imagination into his thought and feeling when he penned it. The teaching means a reproduction and interpretation of this for the pupil, so that he will enter in some measure into the author's heritage. Care is thus being taken that the pupil is getting more than the words: he is getting the poem itself. (15-6)

As in the teaching notes for the 1924 *Course of Instruction*, the ideas presented in these 'Notes' referred to problems associated with teaching children to appreciate poetry, particularly the apparent conflict between their imaginatively 'feeling' the poem and knowing the text. The 'Notes' advised teachers that analysis and explanation of a poem were not always helpful and 'would be akin to dissecting a flower to show its beauty' (16).<sup>16</sup> Yeats's 'The Lake Isle of Innisfree' and Newbolt's 'Craven' were cited as examples of poems that require 'broad treatment' that is 'poles apart from the meaningless word-exercises and simultaneous drone' of 'ordinary school exercises' (16-7). The only positive suggestion made to enhance children's appreciation was to emphasise the importance of the teachers' presentation and reading of poetry to the class: 'The teacher does not need any great dramatic

gifts for such reading; all can acquire the power of utterance to give expression to the meaning and feeling behind the words' (16).

### **Inspecting and examining poetry**

The challenge for teachers was to demonstrate to inspectors that their pupils could not only understand, but also appreciate the poetry they taught. As early as 1922, Inspector Fletcher had warned teachers that the forthcoming revised *Course of Instruction* would place greater emphasis on 'literary study', and recommended that they read Chubb's text on the teaching of English, particularly chapters 6, 7, 9 and 10 on the content and methods of treating reading and literature in primary grades.

Fletcher posed a series of questions for teachers to consider when teaching literature:

Do pupils know the subject matter? Have they realized the author's meaning? Have they visualized this or that scene? Do they recognize the humour or pathos in a particular passage? Have they felt the thrill of this passage or the suggestiveness or importance of that? Do they know what period of time or what geographical places the author is depicting? Can they tell a few simple facts about the life of the author? Do they know the names of any of his other works? (*ER* March 1922, 64)

While teachers were familiar with inspectors' methods of testing children's comprehension of poetry and were accustomed to preparing children to answer some of these questions posed by Fletcher, they were less certain about inspectors' methods of assessing children's appreciation of poems. And, to some extent, this uncertainty is understandable, given that inspectors appeared to rely on generalised rhetoric about appreciation, rather than specific and practical strategies for its realisation. This rhetoric focussed repeatedly on words and ideas such as 'visualization', 'mental pictures', 'imagination', 'the inward eye', 'beauty' and 'emotions'.

The general nature of the guidance inspectors provided teachers about the appreciation of poetry during this period is illustrated by the following extracts from their reports. In 1925, Inspector Wright noted that the poems memorised were 'not always understood, and the emotions are frequently untouched'. There were many instances where classes were unable 'to pick out any of the word pictures in their poems', leading him to conclude:



This is proof that, though the poems have been learnt, there has not been much intelligent study of them. In such a study there is the opportunity for developing the child's imagination. (ER July 1925, 92)

Inspector Fletcher reported on another occasion that pupils were 'deficient in "vision"' and that it was 'assuredly part of the teacher's task to train pupils to visualize the scenes read' (ER February 1925, 38). Inspector Jones agreed, believing that children

should be given occasional exercises in visualisation – the use of the "inward eye". They should be trained to develop mental pictures in such poems as "The Daffodils," where the colour, the movement, and the beauty of the scene should all be made clear'. (ER March 1932, 52)

According to Inspector Miller, appreciation of poetry consisted of teaching children 'to appreciate and discover for themselves' features of a poem 'that are often passed by unnoticed', including the 'beautiful simile, the apt adjective, the correct verb, and the verbal music [...]' (ER March 1930, 47)

Inspectors gave limited attention to the enjoyment of poetry in their reports.

Inspector Wright went some way to addressing this, however, in his comments on the teaching of literature in 1926:

The field of literature is almost unlimited, the labour in it easy and delightful, and the fruits a zest and interest in the subject that influences not only school work, but the children and the teachers. The only requirement is a little thoughtful and appreciative reading and selection by the teacher [...]. One word of warning – *literature cannot be taught – it can be appreciated only.* (ER July 1926, 95)

His 'word of warning' was a rare note in the professional discourse of the time.

Several years later, Wright appeared to ignore these sentiments. He was concerned that teachers should achieve a balance between pupils' precise understanding of a poem ('the facts') and their appreciation and enjoyment of the work. His expectations would have challenged, and perhaps confused, many teachers:

Some teachers appear to think that the sole purpose of teaching poetry is to improve the memory. The fact that it may become a powerful ally to morals by deepening the emotional nature, and so enriching the soil of the virtues, is lost sight of [...]. In the treatment of a poem, drilling in facts alone may make for habits of accuracy and precision, but it will kill the appreciation and enjoyment of poetry. On the other hand, we must not ignore the facts and unduly emphasise the feeling element, because by so doing we shall engender slovenliness and inaccuracy, and throw the whole pursuit of poetry into an atmosphere of sentimentalism. When pupils lack the appropriate imagery, it

is useless for the teacher to say “this is beautiful”. The pupil must be led to feel and to see that it is beautiful. (*ER* March 1929, 51)

Faced with such demands, conscientious teachers would have worked hard to ensure that their pupils could respond well to rigorous questions on a poem’s literal meaning, but also provide detailed reasons for their response to its beauty.

Examinations conducted by the Department at the conclusion of the grade 6 year impacted as much on the teaching of poetry at that level as did school inspections. These examinations were, in fact, set and marked by the inspectors and so reflected their approaches to the subject. The Qualifying Examination (renamed the Scholarship Examination in 1925) identified those pupils suited for high school education. Pupils not wishing to proceed to secondary schooling undertook the Merit Examination to mark the successful conclusion of their compulsory education.<sup>17</sup> Questions on poetry featured regularly in the Merit examinations, and in those for Scholarships until 1927. These questions revealed the outcomes the Department expected from the teaching of poetry in senior primary school classes.

Each year the Department identified and published a list of about 12 lessons from the class reader on which questions in the examinations would be based. On average, 4 of these lessons were poems. Those prescribed for special study in 1931 from the sixth *British Empire Reader* were Tennyson’s ‘Sir Lancelot in the Lists’, Bowen’s ‘Forty Years On’, Shelley’s ‘The Recollection’ and Henry’s soliloquy on sleep from Shakespeare’s *Henry IV* (*ER* November 1930, 148). The 1931 English examination paper for the Merit Certificate included questions on 3 of these poems:

In “Sir Lancelot in the Lists” –

- (a) Describe “the lists.”
- (b) Explain the meaning of, and name the figure of speech in –  
“The peopled gallery, which half round  
Lay like a rainbow fall’n upon the grass.”
- (c) Quote any six lines from the poem.
- (d) Who said, “Me you call great”?
- (e) Describe the last references made in the poem about Sir Lancelot.

In Henry IV’s Soliloquy on Sleep –

- (a) Explain: soliloquy, ‘larum bell, the rude imperious surge.
- (b) Who was “the dull god”?
- (c) Quote any six lines.

- (d) What is the meaning of -  
"Canst thou, O partial sleep, give thy repose  
To the wet sea-boy in an hour so rude"?

Answer the following on "Forty Years On" –

- (a) Who wrote the poem?
- (b) What game is indicated in the chorus?
- (c) What is the meaning of "Strife without anger, and art without malice"?
- (d) Quote any verse you can.
- (e) What bases can be guarded or beleaguered 40 years on?  
(*ER* May 1932, 81-2)

By placing an emphasis on facts, literal meaning and vocabulary, as well as testing the memorisation of selected passages, these questions indicated clearly the primary importance given to comprehending the text of the poems. And changes made to the methods of examining poetry during these years showed that the examiners' were determined that pupils should demonstrate a detailed knowledge of the content of the poems in their answers. Some questions in earlier years had been framed in an open and expansive mode, but had obviously not elicited the detailed knowledge expected by examiners. Examples of such questions set in the 1920s included the following:

You have read the poem called "The Builders". State what it says and means. (Qualifying Examination, 1923. *ER* March 1923, 52)

What thoughts does "the bit of heath" bring to Kendall?

OR

Why is "Blow, Blow" called a song? (Merit Examination 1928. *ER* April 1929, 70)

Subsequently, a question on Kendall's poem in the 1933 Merit English paper was designed to test more closely candidates' knowledge of the poem, and was marked accordingly:

What famous Scottish characters did the "Heath from the Highlands" bring to Kendall's mind in his "dream"? (5 marks)

Explain the following extracts from this poem:-

- (a) "So potent is this heather."
- (b) "Here the hermit hornet hums."
- (c) "The mountains gleam against the Northern Star."
- (d) "The darling of his dreams, the Lady of the Lake."
- (e) "Mountain wall where breaks the torrent loose." (5 marks each)

That same paper's questions on Tennyson's 'Sir Lancelot in the Lists' and Polonius's advice to Laertes did provide an opportunity for imaginative and expanded responses, although the marking scheme for the question on the passage from

Shakespeare placed strict limits on pupils' powers of imagination. The second part of the question on Tennyson's poem read:

Give a description of a hermit, such as the one mentioned in this poem. How would he employ his time? (10 marks)

The question on the passage from *Hamlet* was at least framed imaginatively, although the explanation in parenthesis demonstrates clearly the examiner's control over an examinee's flights of fancy:

Imagine that a father of today were sending his son to France and wished to give him the same advice that Polonius gave Laertes. Give your version of the father's words. (3 marks for restatement of each sentence in the poem.) (ER May 1934, 86)

Given the nature of the poetry questions in these examinations, it is not surprising, and perhaps rather unfair, that inspectors in several reports on students' performances commented on their having 'little or nothing to say' about the 'literary flavour' of the poems (ER May 1927, 77), or their 'inability to visualise scenes and events' and their 'lack of imagination' (ER February 1921, 39). The limitations and rigidity of the examining process appeared to lock grade 6 teachers and students into a narrow range of poetry reading and treatment. Inspector Wright was particularly concerned that some schools in his district devoted the whole reading program for the year to the 12 lessons prescribed for intensive reading and that scarcely any poetry was learnt 'apart from what the teacher sets' (ER July 1925, 91-2). While he found some evidence that the scope of reading was expanding and that 'appreciation' was being developed in some schools, he acknowledged that these activities were limited by examination requirements (ER June 1928, 82). The Department's decision to prescribe annual class readers instead of the monthly issues of the *School Papers* could also have been a factor in restricting children's wide reading and experience of poetry.

### **The *Pacific* and *British Empire* Readers**

The fifth and sixth *Pacific Readers* replaced the *School Papers* for grades 5 and 6 in 1924, and the *British Empire Readers* were prescribed reading for grades 1 – 6 from 1929.<sup>18</sup> Both sets of readers were prescribed for limited periods of no more than five years. Specific reasons were given for the introduction of these texts in place of the *School Papers*. Inspector Brockett believed that some teachers selected unsuitable

poems from the papers for class study, implying that the range of poetry available was too extensive and variable and that some teachers were incapable of judging what was suitable for their classes (*ER* April 1921, 65). Inspector Jones attributed a decrease in interest and reading comprehension in the senior classes to the 'difficulty of much of the reading material' in the papers (*ER* April 1921, 68). Inspector Wright reported that teachers had welcomed the introduction of the *Pacific Readers* in grades 5 and 6 and considered them 'preferable' to the *School Papers* (*ER* June 1923, 109). Inspector Brockett commented on the new readers' 'well chosen' selection of reading material that interested children and provided 'opportunities for expression' (*ER* March 1927, 51). His 1927 annual report included the following statement about the *British Empire Readers*:

The general use of the Empire reading books has proved beneficial in various ways. There is a suitable gradation in difficulty from class to class; the lessons are interesting, and some are admirably adapted to improvement in the art of reading aloud, and the pictures reach a high standard of artistic excellence. (*ER* March 1928, 55)

No doubt, too, teachers found the spelling lists and English exercises, biographical notes on the writers, essay outlines for class use and lists of Latin and Greek roots in the *Pacific Readers*, and the 'Notes and Explanations' of words and allusions in the *British Empire Readers*, particularly useful. Compared to the *School Papers*, these two sets of readers were highly structured and tailored for classroom use. The *Pacific Readers*, for example, contained sets of comprehension questions, language and writing exercises associated with each of its readings. Unless they wished otherwise, teachers had little need to use personal initiative or plan their own lessons. The *School Papers*, on the other hand, provided a rich and ever-changing reading resource from which teachers had to select material appropriate for their classes and then devise appropriate learning activities. I suspect, too, that most teachers in the system would have felt more at home with the traditional class reader, having themselves experienced such readers as primary pupils. And the material in the readers would have been more familiar to them than some of the poetry in many issues of the *School Papers*, particularly the contemporary and Australian poems. The poetry in the *Pacific* and *Empire* readers consisted almost entirely of conventional and traditional verse, similar and sometimes identical to that included in earlier school readers.

Both sets of the new readers were designed for school use in countries across the British Empire. The *Pacific Readers* were more clearly aimed at primary school children in Australia and New Zealand, as confirmed by the preface to the sixth reader:

The Pacific Readers are designed by the publishers to provide for Australasian children reading that will stand in more direct relation to our surroundings than the subject matter usually found in foreign reading books, and that will at the same time assist in fostering the growth of national and patriotic sentiments, which cannot be inculcated at too early an age.

But the aims of these readers extended beyond this:

It will be found that the topics cover a wide field; for while many are of direct Australasian interest, others have been included with a view to broaden the outlook of the children and counteract any tendency to insularity [...]. [W]ise selections have been included from the masterpieces of English Literature, so that it may be fairly claimed that the series as a whole has been devised to produce the culture which good reading affords – in short the books are not mere manuals for learning to read, but aids to the cultivation of taste and the healthy development of the imagination of young readers.<sup>19</sup>

The language of the preface, particularly the images of ‘growth’, ‘cultivation’ and ‘healthy development’, echoed the sentiments of Joseph Lancaster at the beginning of the nineteenth century. The results accruing from this organic imagery, however, differed from those sought by Lancaster. Matters of taste, imagination and patriotism superseded Christian belief and moral behaviour. And the references to ‘insularity’, the ‘Mother Country’ (mentioned elsewhere in the same preface) and the implication that ‘culture’ and ‘taste’ are derived from the ‘good reading’ of ‘masterpieces of English Literature’ represented a form of colonial inferiority, promoted locally by some inspectors in relation to literature study in particular. Inspector Wright, for example, lamented in 1925, that in his schools ‘the storehouse of gems of English verse is not voluntarily invaded’ (*ER* July 1925, 92).

The sixth *Pacific Reader* contained 65 separate reading lessons, of which 44 were prose passages that included historical and informative passages on topics such the ‘The Establishment of the Colony of New Zealand’, ‘A Great Australian Statesman: Sir Henry Parkes’, ‘Laws and Their Uses’, ‘Coal Tar and its Products’, ‘Health’, ‘Faraday and Darwin’, ‘The Daily Paper’, ‘The Peninsula War’, and ‘The

Destruction of Pompeii'.<sup>20</sup> The prose readings included extracts from novels such as Alcott's *Little Women*, Dickens's *Pickwick Papers* and Scott's *Rob Roy*. As these examples suggest, the *Pacific Readers* were similar to the *Irish Readers* in their attempt to cover topics related to other subjects in the curriculum, in addition to those relating to literature and history.

The *British Empire Readers* restricted their readings almost entirely to literary and historical material. The sixth reader contained 66 separate readings of which 51 were prose. The majority of these prose passages comprised extracts from writers such as Charles Dickens (*The Old Curiosity Shop*, *Martin Chuzzlewit*, *Nicholas Nickleby*, for example) Conan Doyle (including *Micah Clarke*), R.L. Stevenson, H. Rider Haggard, Captain Marryat, George Eliot, William Thackeray, Walter Scott, G.A. Henty (*Yule Logs*) and Henry Kingsley (*The Recollections of Geoffrey Hamlyn*). Extracts from works by F.W. Fitchett, James Froude and Francis Parkman described famous British naval battles and events in American history.

Both readers contained proportionately less poetry than did an average of the issues of the 1910 and 1920 *School Papers*.<sup>21</sup> Thirty-seven percent of the lessons in the sixth *Pacific Reader* and 30% of the lessons in the sixth *British Empire Reader* were poems.<sup>22</sup> Table 24 lists the poets and their poems in these two readers and identifies both the poets and poems included in earlier readers and the *School Papers*.

All but 1 of the 29 poets in the two readers had featured in previous class readers, indicating a marked consensus about the canon of poets considered appropriate for primary school study, or, perhaps, the derivative nature of the collections. The only poet new to this canon was Oscar Wilde, whose poem 'Ave Imperatrix' in the *Pacific Reader* related to a major theme of that reader's poetry. Just over two-thirds of the poets were established writers from the nineteenth century, most of whom had appeared in that century's school readers. Five of the 10 most frequently represented poets in those readers appeared in the *Pacific* and *Empire* readers: Byron, Felicia Hemans, H.W. Longfellow, Walter Scott and Shakespeare. Three of the remaining five, Wordsworth, William Cowper, and Thomas Campbell, appeared in the first editions of the forthcoming *Tasmanian Readers*. Poems by Thomas Moore and James Montgomery last appeared in issues of the *School Papers* in 1910 and 1921

respectively, and were not featured in the *Tasmanian Readers*. Charles Kingsley, Rudyard Kipling, Scott, Shakespeare and Tennyson were included in both the *Pacific* and *Empire* readers. Shakespeare's pre-eminence in the nineteenth-century readers continued, Kipling and Tennyson's popularity was confirmed, and Scott's was in decline. Although Kingsley's work was represented in *School Papers* at least 7 times during the period 1906-1926, none of his poems had appeared in the nineteenth-century readers considered in this study and none was included in the forthcoming *Tasmanian Readers*. Longfellow's presence was much less prominent than it had been in the second half of the previous century.<sup>23</sup> Both readers included American and Australian poets who had appeared in previous school readers, Emerson, Whitman, Kendall and Paterson. J.G. Wilson and A.E. Currie were New Zealand poets.<sup>24</sup>

Sixteen of the 43 poems in the *Pacific* and *Empire Readers* had appeared in the sample of previously prescribed class readers. Seven poems had featured in more than one of these: Byron's 'The Ocean' and Scott's 'Patriotism' in four sets of readers; Browning's 'Good News from Ghent to Aix', Macaulay's 'Horatius', Scott's 'The Combat', Shakespeare's 'The Seven Ages of Man', 'Soliloquy on Sleep' and 'Mercy', and Tennyson's 'New Year's Eve' in two. Only Kipling's 'Recessional' and Shakespeare's 'Soliloquy on Sleep' appeared in both the *Pacific* and *Empire Readers*. The *Pacific Reader* included 16 of the 23 'new' poems in its selection, and the *British Empire Reader* 10 of these. This difference reflected the narrower range and more conservative nature of the subject material in the latter reader, material focussing predominantly on the might and permanence of Britain and the Empire. The poetry in both readers promoted themes of heroism and patriotism. In keeping with the nineteenth-century tradition of elementary school poetry, some poems addressed matters of personal character and social conduct, and very few were Romantic or humorous in nature.

The *British Empire Reader* contained most of the narrative poems of bravery and heroism. Descriptions of classical feats of heroism in poems such as Macaulay's 'Horatius', W.E. Aytoun's 'Edinburgh After Flodden', Tennyson's 'Sir Lancelot in the Lists' and Walt Whitman's 'A Sea Fight' were read in association with Kipling's 'Ballad of East and West', E.E. Bowen's 'Forty Years On' and Henry Newbolt's



'Vitae Lampada' to link concepts of courage against great odds in 'the brave days of old' with contemporary events (37). The famous Harrow School song's 'tramp of the twenty-two men' who were neither 'the last or the faintest' when the 'battle raged hottest', and its aging scholars who still seek 'bases to guard or beleaguer', resonate with images of epic battles fought with the courage of the ancients (101-2). And Newbolt's 'Vitae Lampada' makes the direct connection between valour against odds on both the sports field and the desert battlefield. Scott's 'Patriotism' makes clear that sacrificing personal needs and life in the service of the country is the difference between a 'wretch, concentrated all in self' and the true patriot (209).

The six patriotic poems in the *Pacific Reader* focus on the might and significance of the British Empire, rather than on the valour of individuals. Swinburne's 'Trafalgar Day' celebrates Nelson's greatness, but is a descriptive paean of praise rather than an account of the admiral's heroic deeds. Harold Begbie's 'Britons Beyond the Seas', Conan Doyle's 'The Frontier Line', Kipling's 'The Flowers' and Oscar Wilde's 'Ave Imperatrix' all address matters of empire, often in discursive mode. Begbie's poem celebrates colonials' continuing ties with Britain, but acknowledges that, although colonists still call Britain 'Home' with a love that 'endures', they are now 'rooted' to new lands because of family and the 'pilgrim dust' of their forbears. They have 'younger visions' and 'mightier dreams', but nevertheless

with the bolder vision  
 We cleave to you, look to you still,  
 That you gather our scattered toil and bind  
 Our strength in a single will;  
 That you build with us out of the coasts of the earth,  
 A realm, a race, and a rede  
 That shall govern the peace of the world and serve  
 The humblest State in her need. (51)

Kipling's 'The Flowers' and Doyle's 'The Frontier Line' convey somewhat different suggestions of a familial bond linking people across the wide span of Britain's empire. Both, however, establish this link to 'home' with references to either the 'English posies' or the lonely graves of 'British brothers' in distant places at the fringes of 'the flowing Saxon wave' (217, 150).

Kipling's 'Recessional' and Wilde's 'Ave Imperatrix' serve as an antidote to chauvinistic imperialism in their recalling of the enormity of the sacrifice that has

created the empire, and reminding readers that such greatness could come to dust. Kipling warns that trust 'In reeking tube and iron shard' and the 'frantic boast and foolish word' of power could result in the dust of 'Nineveh and Tyre' (BE 234). Wilde's poem identifies the empire's greatness with references to its many territories which have been won 'by sword and fire', then examines the cost of this for both the victors and the defeated, before expressing a hope that 'when this fiery web is spun', England's

watchman shall descry from far,  
The young Republic like a sun  
Rise from these crimson seas of war. (PR 249)

Didactic poems of both a personal and social nature are more prominent in the *Pacific Reader*, where poems in the tradition of Isaac Watts and his contemporaries are only slightly less well represented than poems of patriotism. The extract from Chaucer ('modernised by W.D.A.') counsels humility, hard work, truthfulness, acceptance of current circumstances and lot in life, and Christian pilgrimage. Longfellow's theme in 'The Builders' is similar to ideas promulgated in the earliest readers prescribed for Tasmanian elementary schools in the 1840s. He reminds readers that their acts and deeds will not 'remain unseen', that 'the Gods see everywhere'. A person's body and character should be 'the house where God may dwell / Beautiful, entire and clean' because

Thus alone can we attain  
To those turrets, where the eye  
Sees the world as one vast plain,  
And one boundless reach of sky. (PR 173)

Gerald Massey echoes these ideas in his 'Today and Tomorrow' using imagery common to many poems in the BFSS *Lesson Books* and *Irish Readers*. Today's 'wilderness' and 'martyrdom' are tomorrow's 'harvest' and 'promised land'. So youth must 'still aspire / With energies immortal!' (PR 184). Some of the selections from Shakespeare in the *Empire Reader* are obviously included for similar didactic purposes, particularly 'The Counsel of Polonius' with its advice about relations with others, dress, money and self-honesty. In the same reader, Tennyson's 'New Year's Eve' anticipates a new spirit in civic and national life: 'sweeter manners, purer laws'; 'the common love of good'; 'the love of truth and right'.

Ring in the valiant man and free,

The larger heart, the kindlier hand:  
Ring out the darkness of the land,  
Ring in the Christ that is to be. (*BE* 111)

Ralph Waldo Emerson's 'Each and All' and Charles Kingsley's 'Tide River' introduce a new theme to the didactic discourse, both expressing concern for the environment. Emerson's poem foreshadows more recent concerns about the preservation of eco-systems when he regrets disturbing the sparrow from its habitat of 'river and sky', and removing some 'delicate shells' from 'the sun and the sand and the wild uproar' of the seashore (*PR* 142). Kingsley's 'Tide River' is a powerfully charged description of a river once 'clear and cool', now 'dank and foul', polluted with the 'murky cowl' from the smoke and sewers of a town, but eventually again 'strong and free' as it moves beyond human habitation and becomes like 'a soul that has sinned and is pardoned again, / Undefined for the undefined' (*PR* 82). Here the Victorian sense of religious mission unites with a concern for the natural environment.

This concern for the natural world suggests a link with some aspects of Romantic poetry. Byron's 'The Ocean' is one of only three such poems included in the readers. In 'Recollection' Shelley finds 'momentary peace' in the surroundings of the pine forest. The 'Elysian glow' of this setting becomes a 'spirit interfused around, / A thrilling silent life', a 'magic circle [...] filled with love' (*BE* 23-5). In her poem 'A Spring Afternoon in New Zealand', Wilson also describes a ride 'in the shadowy place of pines'. Here the wind 'whispers' as in a 'house of prayer', and a ray of sunshine 'on yonder wooded fold [...] writes a word in gold'. It is a place of 'deep repose' in which 'to soothe a trivial care' (*PR* 28-9).

The theme of exile from one's native land is given limited but powerful recognition in both readers. One instance is Currie's 'Laudabunt Alii' where the author recalls the delight of his native 'fields of Maoriland'. Others may yearn for 'the lights of London town', Japanese 'tea-girls' twinkling feet', the ocean 'combers' of the North Pacific or the Sydney Heads, but the grandest sight for him is 'the lingering flush of the sun's last ray on the peaks of Maoriland' (*PR* 33). Kingsley's 'The Pleasant Isle of Aves' is a poem of social conscience, using an old seaman's lament for the

pleasures of his adopted island home to highlight his final years of penury and neglect.

The two Australian poems included in the readers have associations with exile and the attraction of the elsewhere. In 'Heath from the Highlands', Kendall's imagination is stirred by a sprig of heath so that a 'highland sky my vision fills' resonant with recollections of Robbie Burns, William Wallace and Robert Bruce (*BE* 157). And for Paterson the 'magic of the breeze's breath' conjures thoughts 'of blue hills far away beyond the smoky town' and his hope 'to see once more those sunny southern hills, / And strike once more the bridle-track that leads along the Bland' (*PR* 160).

Such was the prescribed poetry read, studied and recited in senior primary classes from the mid 1920s until the *Tasmanian Readers* were introduced in 1933. The poetry in these two readers added little to the canon of poets, poems and themes established in earlier class readers. It confirmed poetry to be the medium for espousing national and social values, and the moral truths of the time. Many of the poems were imbued with a Victorian sense of mission that might have satisfied Matthew Arnold's definition of 'good art' as 'the powerful application of ideas to life' (Bellringer and Jones, viii).

### **The canon of poets studied in Tasmanian primary schools 1906 – 1933**

The *Tasmanian Journal*, *Tasmanian Primers I and II*, *Tasmanian Readers I and II*, the *Tasmanian History Readers*, the four 1921 issues of the *Educational Record* containing prescribed poems for infant classes, the 1910 and 1920 issues of the *Tasmanian School Paper*, and the sixth *Pacific and British Empire Readers* contained collectively 132 anonymous or unattributed poems and a further 391 poems written by 209 poets. Here there were slightly fewer poems than in the sample of nineteenth-century readers considered in chapter 1, but over 50 more poets. The diversity of poetry contained in these readers is revealed by the small number of poets represented by 3 or more poems in this group of texts. Only 32 of the 209 poets had 3 or more of their poems included in the readers. Of these, 21 had 4 or more poems included, and only 7 were represented by 6 or more poems. The canon has broadened considerably since the previous century, particularly in the field of Australian poetry and that written for young children.

Table 25 lists the 32 poets most frequently featured in the class readers for this period and indicates the number of their poems included in the texts, the number of readers in which their work appeared and the title of any of their poems that featured more than once in the readers.<sup>25</sup> Of the 10 most frequently represented poets in nineteenth-century readers, Shakespeare with 23 poems, Longfellow with 19, and Scott and Byron each with 5 poems maintained a similar level of representation from 1906 to 1933. Wordsworth and Campbell were each now represented by only 4 poems compared to 19 and 16 respectively in the previous century's readers. Cowper, Hemans and Moore were each represented only twice in the 7 readers and James Montgomery not at all. Poets who now assumed some prominence in the class readers were Tennyson with 12 poems, Edward Shirley with 11 poems, Rudyard Kipling and R.L. Stevenson, each with 8 poems, Shelley with 6, and Robert Burns and A.B. Paterson with 5. Tennyson's poetry matched a range of themes popular in all readers, including history and patriotism, and some of his lyrics, such as 'Sweet and Low' and 'Cradle Song', were included in the infant class readers. The popularity of Shirley and Stevenson reflected a greater emphasis on poems appropriate for young pupils. Several other poets listed in Table 25, such as Gabriel Setoun, Christina Rossetti and George MacDonald, were chosen for the same reason. Poems by Tennyson and Longfellow were included in more readers than any of the others listed in Table 25. Shakespeare, Kipling, Byron, Paterson, Robert Browning and Kingsley were also featured in more than half of the readers. Wordsworth's poetry was included only in the *School Papers*, and Christina Rossetti's poetry was restricted almost entirely to the infant class readers.

Table 14 (chapter I) identifies 18 individual poems that were included in 3 or more nineteenth-century class readers. No similar level of frequency occurred in the early twentieth-century readers where 13 poems featured in no more than 2 readers. These poems are listed in Table 25. Scott's 'Patriotism' (sometimes titled 'Love of Country') is the only poem in this list that was also included in 3 nineteenth-century class readers. The diversity of poems and broad representation of poets in these readers contrasts with the more limited range of poetry and restricted number of poets featured in nineteenth-century readers, and could be due to the independence of editors and collectors such as C.R. Long and Amy Rowntree, the increased interest in

younger children's writing, and Long's extensive coverage of Australian verse. The introduction of the *Pacific* and *Empire* readers in the 1920s, however, once more set limits on the range of poetry studied in Tasmanian primary classrooms. And this restricted canon was consolidated with the introduction of the *Tasmanian Readers* in the early 1930s, and their use in classrooms for the next two decades.

### **The *Tasmanian Readers* for grades 3, 4, 5 and 6**

The first editions of the *Tasmanian Readers* for grades 3-6 were published in 1933. An announcement in that year's November *Educational Record* advised schools that copies would be distributed in December and that they would replace the *British Empire Readers* from 1934 (166). The material included in the readers was drawn from numerous sources including school readers published in South Australia and Victoria and other texts published within Australia and overseas.<sup>26</sup> For the first time, however, senior Tasmanian Education Department officers had selected the material across all grades specifically for the State's schools. Although the aims of the readers were not published in a preface to the texts, some years later a notice in the *Educational Record* stated that the readers were 'used mainly for reading improvement; improvement in power, style, comprehension, and appreciation of literary graces' (*ER* October 1944, 128).

The *Tasmanian Readers* were based on the structure of similar readers in use at that time. They provided appropriately graded readings for English lessons over one year. Literary material and some extracts from accounts of current and historical events predominated; classroom readers no longer contained material on broader aspects of the school curriculum, such as science and health. In addition to the poetry, most of the prose comprised extracts from classic and contemporary writers such as Hans Andersen, Louisa Alcott, Rolf Boldrewood, Nathaniel Hawthorne, Ethel Turner, Marcus Clarke, Jack London, Washington Irving and Charles Lamb. Australian poetry and prose featured in each reader. The grade 6 reader provided 'Notes and Difficult Words and Phrases with Their Meanings' at the end of the text. These notes did not include exercises for class use.

The total number of prose passages and poems in the grade 3, 4, 5 and 6 readers ranged from 50 to 64. Poetry comprised between 20% and 40% of the total contents,

a similar prose-poetry ratio to that of the nineteenth-century school readers, but smaller percentages than those in the *Tasmanian Primers*, *Tasmanian Readers I* and *II* and the sample of *School Papers* examined above (see Table 18 in the previous chapter). Table 26 shows the percentage of poetry included in each of the new readers. The grade 6 *Tasmanian Reader* contained fewer separate readings than the *Pacific* and *Empire Readers* for that grade, but a greater percentage of these were poems, 40% compared with 32% in the *Pacific Reader* and 22% in the *Empire Reader*. The prominence given to poetry in the sixth *Tasmanian Reader* was similar to that in the infant readers.

Table 27 lists the 39 poets and 62 poems in the first editions of the *Tasmanian Readers* for grades 3, 4, 5 and 6. The majority of the poets were English writers, 10 were Australian and 3 were American. All but 7 of the 39 had written and published in the previous century or earlier. Six were female. Thirty-four of these poets had appeared in earlier class readers examined in this study. The 5 poets not represented in previous class readers were the English writers Alfred Austin, Lawrence Binyon, F.H. Doyle and John Wagner, and one Australian, Edward Dyson.<sup>27</sup> Thirty-six of the 62 poems had not been included in previous class readers. Eighteen of these were by English poets, 13 by Australians and 3 by the American, Longfellow.<sup>28</sup>

The most frequently represented poets in the *Tasmanian Readers* were Tennyson with 6 poems, Longfellow with 5, and Byron, Kendall, Masfield, and Paterson each with 3. Cowper, George Essex Evans, Keats, Scott, Shelley and Wordsworth were represented by 2 poems. Longfellow's poems appeared in the 4 readers, and those by Tennyson and Paterson in 3 readers. Two features of the poetry selected for these readers contrasted with that in previous collections: the increased presence of the classic Romantic poets; and Shakespeare's very limited representation.

Nine of the poets in the *Tasmanian Readers* had maintained a presence in class readers since the 1840s. Poems by Coleridge, Cowper, Mary Howitt, Milton, Shakespeare and Wordsworth had featured in the BFSS *Lesson Books* used in the colony's schools almost one hundred years earlier. All these poets, except Coleridge, were also represented in the *Irish Readers*, as were Thomas Campbell, Longfellow and Scott. In most of these cases, the poets were represented by different works in

more recent readers. Three poems still in favour for primary school readers, however, were Cowper's 'Lines by Alexander Selkirk', Longfellow's 'The Village Blacksmith' and Milton's 'On His Blindness', the first and last of these having been present in class readers in Tasmanian schools since 1841.

The continuity of poets and poems was matched by a persistent focus on certain popular themes. These themes are evident, too, in the poems included for the first time in the *Tasmanian Readers*. Austin's 'In Praise of England', Carleton's 'Song of Australia' and Evans's 'The Nation Builders' present themes of patriotism, sometimes conveyed by religious and family images in the traditional style.<sup>29</sup> Austin and Evans associate aspects of the country they praise with religion. Austin's English home is 'sanctified by prayer' and the hamlet 'hallowed by its spire' (5, 14). Evans describes the work of the nation builders as 'shaped' by the 'hands of the Builder', described as 'a Mighty Genius' and 'Over Soul' (5, 178). While Carleton's poem describes Australia as the 'Fairest of Britain's daughters' (3, 1), that by Evans eschews any such references, choosing to focus on the growing power of Australia and the progress being achieved.

William Blake's 'The Lamb' and Mary Howitt's 'The Coming of Spring' continue the traditional theme of a protective God who provides succour and comfort. Evans suggests that God 'hears and understands the Women of the West' in the midst of their isolation on 'the frontiers of the Nation' (5, 140). And Kendall's shingle-splitters enjoy a life 'away from din, and sorrow and sin' where 'Heaven smiles [...] and God in the woodland dwells' (3, 77). Paterson's 'Over the Range' presents another popular nineteenth-century subject by affirming that present sorrows will be compensated by joys in the life to come. These joys are a 'gift' that God has 'in store' for the 'bush maiden', a place of 'blossoming trees and pretty flowers', and specifically Australian with its 'shining creeks where the golden grass / Is fresh and sweet from the summer showers' (3, 187). This is an Australian version of Tennyson's 'The Passing of Arthur' where the life to come is the 'island-valley of Avilion':

Where falls not hail, or rain, or any snow,  
Nor ever wind blows loudly; but it lies  
Deep-meadowed, happy, fair with orchard-lawns  
And bowery hollows crown'd with summer sea. (6, 65)



Most of the Australian poems included for the first time in these readers convey a similar mood of melancholy pathos, often sentimental in effect. 'The Women of the West', Paterson's 'Lost', Dyson's 'The Old Whim Horse' and Lawson's 'The Teams' frame such feelings with aspects of pioneering life. The pathos here is combined with a muted sense of the heroism of ordinary people confronting difficult circumstances. Heroism of a higher order, but again presented with a degree of pathos, is celebrated in Doyle's 'The Loss of the "Birkenhead"' and Binyon's 'For the Fallen'.

Previously prominent subjects of exile and loss are less prevalent among the 'new' poems. Tennyson's 'Ulysses', Masefield's 'Roadways' and Daly's 'A-Roving' confirm the status of themes of escape and adventure. This can be Daley's sense of 'glamour' that 'draws us on / To the distance, rainbow-spanned' (4, 179), or Masefield's road that leads him 'seawards / To the white dipping sails' (4, 157), or Tennyson's Ulysses who 'cannot rest from travel' and whose 'purpose holds / To sail beyond the sunset, and the baths / Of all the western stars [...]' (6, 107).

The 7 poems in the grade 6 *Tasmanian Reader* by Wordsworth, Coleridge, Shelley and Keats marked the acceptance of Romantic poetry into the canon of primary school poetry. The addition of Keats's 'To a Nightingale', Shelley's 'The Skylark' and Wordsworth's 'The Solitary Reaper' represented the powerful imaginative and emotional responses to nature already conveyed to students by Coleridge's 'Hymn in the Vale of Chamouni' and Shelley's 'The Pine Forest'. Keats and Shelley's poetic representations of the nightingale and skylark are markedly different from the moral and somewhat dispassionate treatment of bird subjects by poets such as Felicia Hemans in previous class readers. Shelley's 'The Cloud' was the most frequently featured of his poems in nineteenth-century readers, and the contrast between that poem's 'technical virtuosity' and the poet's more personally felt response in 'The Skylark' represents a change in poetry now considered appropriate for upper primary classes (O'Neill 121). The increasing popularity of Tennyson's 'Break, Break, Break' and less frequent anthologising of poems such as 'The Brook', or even 'The Charge of the Light Brigade', illustrates this change. It is true, of course, that some of these poems also matched an increasing emphasis on subjects of escape,

dissatisfaction with present circumstances, and a yearning for freedom. Compared to many of the poems read in classrooms in the previous century that promoted acceptance of present difficulties in the certain hope of happiness in the hereafter, most of the poems of the Romantics now favoured by editors of school texts expressed a longing to be elsewhere in the immediate future, their imaginations transporting them to Edenic places in this life, rather than the next.

### **Poetry in the revised editions of the *Tasmanian Readers***

Near the end of 1934, the Education Department began 'a gradual and comprehensive revision of the Course of Instruction' (*ER* October 1934, Supplement 1). This process extended over five years, addressed all subjects of the primary school curriculum and, in the latter stages, was co-ordinated by a full-time Curriculum Officer. The redrafting of the English course of study was underway by the end of 1938. Early in the next year, teachers were invited 'firstly to criticise freely the shortcomings of the present course in English, and secondly, to offer suggestions that will help with the drafting of a better course' (*ER* February 1939, 42). Part of this process was a review of the contents of the *Tasmanian Readers*. The *Educational Record* of June 1939 announced the revision of the grade 5 reader and listed those lessons considered too advanced for the grade, because the vocabulary was too difficult, or the subject matter was unsuitable. Seven poems were included in this list: Austin's 'In Praise of England', Tennyson's 'The Lady of Shalott', Brett Harte's 'Dickens in Camp', Byron's 'The Destruction of Sennacherib's Army' and 'The Ocean', Scott's 'Rosabelle', and Evans's 'The Nation Builders'. Teachers were invited to 'send their criticisms and suggestions to the Curriculum Officer' within the next eight days (82). Then, in 1940, a notice in the March issue of the *Educational Record* announced the preparation of a revised edition of the grade 3 *Tasmanian Reader* and invited teachers to co-operate in the task by

Indicating the lessons in the present Reader which they consider to be unsuitable for the Grade because of the vocabulary, the subject matter, or for any other reason.

Suggesting extracts of prose and verse to replace unsuitable lessons.

Offering to select suitable material for inclusion in the new Reader from books submitted for that purpose by the publishers. (54)

The revised *Tasmanian Readers* for grades 3 and 5 were published in 1940 and those for grades 4 and 6 in 1941. Table 28 lists the number of prose passages and poems in

each revised reader. These texts included more poetry than the first editions of the readers, particularly those for grades 3 and 5, where the numbers of poems increased from 12 to 21 and 14 to 22 respectively. Collectively, the revised readers contained 80 poems. One poem was anonymous and the others were by 53 poets including 1 Irish, 13 Australian and 2 American writers. This was an increase of 18 poems and 15 poets from the 62 poems and 39 poets included in the original editions.

Significant changes were made to the poets and poems included in the revised *Tasmanian Readers*. The 9 poets and 19 poems from the original editions that were omitted from the revised readers are listed in Table 29. Among these poets were Thomas Campbell, Mary Howitt and Jane and Ann Taylor whose poems had featured in many of the earlier class readers. Others omitted were the Australians Lawson, Carleton and Knowles, and also Alfred Austin and Bret Harte, whose poems in the original grade 5 reader were considered inappropriate for the age group. Two other poems considered too advanced for grade 5 pupils were omitted, Scott's 'Rosabelle' and Evans's 'The Nation Builders'. Tennyson's 'The Lady of Shalott' and Byron's 'The Destruction of Sennacherib's Army' and 'The Ocean' were retained, despite being criticised for similar reasons. Two poems that had appeared regularly in many of the previous readers examined in this study were removed from the classroom canon: William Cowper's 'Lines by Alexander Selkirk', first included in the *Third Irish Reader* of 1845, and Longfellow's 'The Village Blacksmith' that appeared for the first time in the *Third Irish Reader* of 1878. Kendall's 'The Last of His Tribe' was also replaced with more lyrical examples of his poetry. Another poem that from today's perspective would appear too advanced for children in grade 3 was omitted from the new edition, Bowen's 'Willow the King'.

Table 30 lists all the poets and poems included in the revised editions of the *Tasmanian Readers*. Twenty-three poets and 37 poems were added to the poets and poems retained from the original readers. Most of these were included in the grades 3 and 5 texts where teachers had been most active in canvassing for change. All the poems in the first edition of the third *Tasmanian Reader* were replaced, and 5 in that for grade 5. Only 3 from the readers for grades 4 and 6 were replaced.

Seventeen of the 23 poets added to the readers had not featured in the sample of readers examined in this study.<sup>30</sup> Most of these poets, including the English writers Lewis Carroll, W.H. Davies and Andrew Lang, and the Australian writers Zora Cross, and Louis Esson, were living at the time of publication. The other 6 poets included were R.L. Stevenson, Robert Southey, W.B. Rands, James Hogg, Thomas Hood and the American, Eugene Field. Only 4 of the 37 poems added to the revised editions of the readers had been included in the class texts that preceded the *Tasmanian Readers*: the anonymous 'The Ant and the Cricket', Scott's 'My Native Land', Southey's 'After Blenheim' and Cuthbertson's 'The Australian Sunrise'.<sup>31</sup> Cuthbertson's poem was one of the most popular Australian poems in schools for several decades because of its evocative description of aspects of the landscape and mood of optimism (Fig.10).

Nine of the 53 poets in the revised *Tasmanian Readers* were women and 13 were Australian. Tennyson was the most represented poet with 8 poems, and 1 or more of his poems appeared in each of the four readers. Longfellow was now represented by only 3 poems, but Byron, Masfield and Paterson (each with 3 poems), and Keats, Scott, Shelley and Wordsworth (each with 2 poems) maintained the level of representation they were given in the original editions. Reduced representation was afforded Kendall (2 poems) and Cowper and Evans, each with 1 poem. Gordon's poems increased to 3 and Cuthbertson and Kipling's to 2. Of the poets new to the readers, only Walter de la Mare with 2 poems was represented more than once.

The nature of the poetry in the revised grade 3 *Tasmanian Reader* suggests changing ideas about the function of poetry within the primary school English curriculum. The subject matter of many of these poems related more closely to the age of the readers and was expressed in language and imagery accessible to them. A lightness of tone and some humour replaced didactic themes and subjects of pathos. Children's pleasure in poetry reading became an important aspect of the selection process. Hence poems by Cross, de la Mare, Field, Edith Millard and Stevenson, for example, replaced those by Lawson, Kendall, Paterson and Longfellow. Many of the new poems addressed young children directly, inviting them to enter the poets' imaginative world. Children would identify immediately with the subject matter of poems such as 'When I was Six', 'The Land of Story Books' and 'The Pedlar's



### 1.—THE AUSTRALIAN SUNRISE.

The Morning Star paled slowly, the Cross hung low to the sea.  
And down the shadowy reaches the tide came swirling free;  
The lustrous purple blackness of the soft Australian night  
Waned in the grey awakening that heralded the light;  
Out of the dying darkness, over the forest dim,  
The pearly dew of the dawning clung to each giant limb  
Till the sun came up from ocean, red with the cold sea mist,  
And smote on the limestone ridges and the shining tree-tops  
kissed:

Then the fiery Scorpion vanished, the magpie's note was heard,  
And the wind in the she-oaks wavered, and the honeysuckles  
stirred,

The airy golden vapour rose from the river's breast,  
The kingfisher came darting out of his crannied nest,  
And the bulrushes and reed-beds put off their sallow grey  
And burnt with cloudy crimson at the dawning of the day.

From *Barwon Ballads and School Verses*, by J. L. CUTHBERTSON.  
(By permission of the Committee of the Old Geelong Grammarians.)

For *Notes, etc.*, see page 197.

Fig. 10. 'The Australian Sunrise'. *The Tasmanian Readers* Grade VI.

Caravan'. The revised reader also contained a greater variety of poetry that included purely descriptive and well-crafted poems in traditional styles, such as Walter de la Mare's 'Silver' and Tennyson's 'The Eagle', poems about the wind, birds and animals, and fanciful poems about dreams and fairies. Ida Rentoul's 'The Little Mia-Mia' is a good example of an Australian poem written specifically for children of this age, creating as it does an imaginative world including boomerangs, kookaburras, dingoes, bunyips and 'nullah, sling and spear' (11). Cuthbertson's 'The Bush', Esson's 'The Shearer's Wife' and James Hebblethwaite's 'The Wanderers' are the only Australian poems that relate to those more serious Australian themes found in the earlier reader. 'The Ant and the Cricket' is a rare remnant of nineteenth-century moral didacticism in the revised readers.

There were less significant changes to the poetry in the revised grade 5 reader. The omission of Alfred Austin's 'In Praise of England' in favour of Dorothea Mackellar's 'My Country', and Scott's 'Rosabelle' in favour of Paterson's 'Clancy of the Overflow' is an obvious attempt to relate some of the poetry to children's more immediate experiences. More interesting, however, is the greater variety of subjects and styles offered, including the purely lyrical (Andrew Lang's 'Song of the Scythe' and Allan Cunningham's 'Song of the Sea'), the more imaginative treatment of narrative (Kipling's 'A Smuggler's Song') and the fancifully humorous ('A-Sitting on a Gate' and 'The Cricket Ball Sings').

Changes made to the poetry in the revised *Tasmanian Readers* acknowledged the interests and capabilities of the age groups in primary schools and foreshadowed further changes to the canon of poetry studied in Tasmanian primary schools later in the century.<sup>32</sup> The poetry canon embraced increasing numbers of poets and a greater range of subjects and themes. In the 1940s, Shakespeare was removed from his once pre-eminent position in the primary school canon and replaced by Tennyson. Overtly moral and didactic poetry favoured at the beginning of the century almost disappeared from the canon; the only poems of Longfellow now favoured, for example, were narratives of historical events. The place of Australian poetry in the primary school was established and the nature of this was changing. While 'traditional' subjects continued to dominate Australian verse in the senior primary grades, the advent of writers such as Zora Cross and Annie Rentoul pointed to the

major change in the primary canon, as illustrated by the contents of the revised *Tasmanian Readers* – the inclusion of poetry written for young people and shaped to children's interests and abilities. Traditional themes of moral, social and national seriousness and qualities of poetic style that had governed the selection of poetry for primary school reading throughout the previous hundred years were succumbing to other values, such as relevance, humour and enjoyment. Some of these changes were foreshadowed in the revised *Course of Instruction* for English, published in 1942.

### **The 1942 *Course of Instruction* for Primary Schools**

During the 1930s, the Department undertook a major revision of the primary school curriculum, beginning with a consideration of 'fundamental principles' on which any future course of instruction should be based. A committee of senior officers and teachers published a list of eleven such principles near the end of 1934.<sup>33</sup> The first principle affirmed that there were 'certain legitimate needs of society and of the individual which must be met by the curriculum', one of which was to 'develop a proper appreciation of beauty' (1). Among the 'essential attitudes and habits which should characterise school activities' and so 'energise the curriculum' were a 'desire for self-improvement and a power of self-control, a reverence for an ideal; in short, an apt appreciation of the true, the good, and the beautiful' (1-2). Means of fostering such attitudes included '[f]acility in reading the mother tongue with intelligent appreciation of the meaning' so that 'the doors of knowledge may open' to a range of subjects including the 'giants of literature' (2). Another of the eleven principles affirmed that there should be 'freedom for teachers to select, within limits, from a wide range of suggestive matter in certain subjects', particularly because a curriculum 'should take local colour from the district in which it is lived' (2).

The Education Department appointed a full-time curriculum officer 1937 whose major task was to co-ordinate curriculum planning and revision according to these principles. Gollan Lewis, an experienced primary school headmaster and former Rhodes Scholar, held this position initially, and one of his first tasks was to revise the English course of study. Lewis consulted extensively over several years with teachers and senior officers about the proposed course. The 1929 *Course of Instruction* was reprinted with minor changes in 1939, but the new course was not finalised until 1941 and subsequently printed in 1942. The Department's 1941

Annual Report to Parliament announced the completion of the English syllabus and described it as 'characterized by a minimum of prescription and a maximum of suggestion' and one that would make 'constant demands on the professional capacity, leadership and interpretative powers of our trained staff' (*J&PP* 127, 1942, Paper 9: 2).

Instructions given to teachers in the new English course and the course details for each grade indicated changing approaches to the content and teaching of poetry. The Literature component of English was divided into two sections, 'Reading' and 'Poetry', and prescriptions and suggestions for the teaching of poetry were provided in more detail than in previous course documents. This information was set out under three sub-headings: 'Study of suitable poems', 'Memorizing and repeating, with pleasing enunciation and expression, suitable poems and favourite verses', and 'Suggested Activity'.<sup>34</sup>

Some of the prescriptions and suggestions for teaching poetry paralleled those in earlier courses of instruction, but teachers were now given more latitude in teaching methods and students provided with opportunities to enjoy a range of creative and varied activities. Certain elements were compulsory, including the reading of the *Tasmanian Readers* for each grade and the 'memorizing and repeating' of poetry (3). The memorising of poetry ranged from 'about' (rather than 'at least' in the 1929 *Course of Study*) 100 lines in grade 3 to 200 lines in grade 6, and the number of lines learnt could be 'more or less according to the capacity of the individual child for memorizing'. The poetry memorized was to include 'the works of the masters', but pupils could 'under guidance' memorise poems of their own choice (9). Forced memory work was frowned on:

Such memorization should not be forced. It should follow easily and naturally from good treatment and intelligent appreciation. (9)

To facilitate this memorisation of poems, pupils 'must not only constantly hear good poetry read aloud', but needed 'frequent opportunities to read it for themselves' (13). Effective recitation of poetry with good 'enunciation and expression' was also 'as important as correct reading or memorization' (3).



Children's appreciation of poetry was to be based on the reading and study of 'varied' and 'suitable' poems that appealed to the pupils' 'natural interests'. Poetry was to be 'a source of genuine delight to the child', developing 'powers of appreciation' and storing the memory with "'fine and gracious fragments of poetry and prose'" (6). Teachers were no longer restricted to teaching poems from the prescribed readers, but were encouraged to select appropriate material from a variety of sources. In grade 3, the poems selected for study

should be vivid in expression, markedly rhythmic, and lend themselves readily to individual and class treatment [...]. At this stage it is essential to appeal to the child's natural sense of rhythm. It is equally important to develop his appreciation of the musical beauty of the words and the imagery of the poems studied. (3)

At this grade level, teachers had to ensure that the 'main ideas' of the poems were 'grasped', but they were to avoid 'over-elaboration'. In grade 6, the teacher's main purpose was to 'lead the pupils to appreciate the beauty of each poem as a whole'. It was necessary therefore 'to consider some of the elements which comprise this beauty, such as the music of the words, the suggestion of the meaning by the sound, the imagery and the rhythm of the poem'. Even so, pupils' appreciation was not to be 'forced' but was to 'grow naturally by feeding on the best' (13).

The 1942 *Course of Instruction* included activities that would enhance the study and appreciation of poetry. Wide personal reading was encouraged, and the 'compilation of anthologies' of favourite and original poems (6). In addition to the *Tasmanian Readers*, anthologies of verse were to be 'readily available to the pupils' (9). Individual and group activities included 'the composition of original verse, miming, dramatization, verse and choral speaking' (3). The aim of literature study in grade 6 was 'to give pupils rich and varied experience through reading and to make literature a means of fuller living to them'. This section of the *Course of Instruction* was prefaced with an extract from the current *Year-Book of the National Society for the Study of Education* that espoused new approaches to teaching:

The approach to literature for real experience and enjoyment must never be analytical and critical; it must always be co-operative, creative; it must be the reader's attempt to put together out of his own past experience the pictures and sounds and odors the writer presents. Very rarely has classroom literature teaching centered on this aim. Unless it does, teachers will continue to develop distaste for genuine literature and turn children back upon the cheap and shoddy [...]. We must not get in the way of the best books with quizzes and

annotations or irrelevant details; rather we must join sympathetically with children to help them live into new experiences and to get from them what is vital and rich for each child's growing and expanding needs. (12)

The 1942 *Course of Instruction* contained some elements of that instructional discourse so prominent in earlier course documents. Children were still expected to acquire a 'store' of 'fine and gracious fragments of poetry and prose' (6), and their appreciation would 'grow naturally by feeding on the best' (13). Such sentiments were, however, in decline. References to poetry as the 'storehouse of noble thoughts' and 'finely-expressed emotion' in the 1911 *Course* (28), or claims that the 'unique power' of the cadence of poetry would provide 'a knowledge of the divine harmony that breathes through all things' in the 1924 *Course* (73) were replaced in 1942 with an emphasis on teaching poems 'of merit' that would 'appeal to pupils' natural interests'. This *Course of Study* appeared to be less concerned with the persuasive and moral powers of poetry, but favoured the development of children's creativity and 'powers of appreciation', sought to extend their 'acquaintance with good poetry' (13) and expected teachers to make poetry 'a source of genuine delight' (6).

### **The Teaching of poetry in the 1930s and 1940s**

The preparation and design of the 1942 *Course of Instruction* had included extensive consultation and dialogue among teachers and between teachers and senior officers. As a result, approaches to the teaching of poetry were changing even before the *Course* was completed and published. As early as 1938, some inspectors' annual school reports placed new emphases on classroom practice. Inspector V. von Bertouch, for instance, noted the need to improve the variety and suitability of poetry taught and was concerned that some schools included too many poems 'of the mournful and depressing type'. He urged teachers to select poetry that appealed to their pupils:

Bright, cheerful action-poems probably have pride of place in the child's esteem [...]. So many poetry books, suitable for children of all ages, and with literary merit and good sentiment, are now published that the teacher has a wide field of choice. (*ER* June 1938, 107)

He stated that poetry was included in the syllabus 'primarily for its aesthetic value', and reported that while most pupils understood the content of individual stanzas of a

poem, its total value was 'often poorly appreciated'. Von Bertouch elaborated on 'appreciation and 'aesthetic value' as follows:

Children can be brought to appreciate the best poetry, especially dramatic poetry, and can be trained to visualise the mental pictures and enter into the spirit of the poet. A few teachers, unfortunately, are making memorisation and recitation the end-all in teaching poetry; they do not realise the necessity for going beneath the written words. Rhythm, rhyme, vowel sounds, alliteration, similes, etc, should be taught as they arise. (108)

The inspector noted that many pupils in senior grades had compiled their own anthologies of poems and that these were neatly written and illustrated in a delightful manner. Bertouch's points about the enjoyment of poetry, its aesthetic appreciation and the wider reading of poetry (implied in his comments on the compilation of anthologies) were new emphases, but the concept of appreciation was not clearly defined. He addressed this aspect in a later report, stating that the teaching of poetry should result 'in a genuine liking for poetry on the part of children'. Such a response would be achieved by 'inspirational' teaching and 'delicate tact' in the treatment of poems: 'The moment a suggestion of drudgery enters into the field of poetry treatment, all real values that should accrue from the teaching effort disappear' (*ER* March 1941, 65).

The Department's first formal attempt to define the meaning it attached to concepts such as 'appreciation', 'taste' and 'value' appeared in its *Report of the Committee on Educational Aims in the Primary School* (1946). This document defined appreciation:

Appreciation, which is the realization of worth or excellence, depends upon both emotional and intellectual reactions. It is a positive act, combining appraisal and approval. Its application covers all aspects of experience in which qualitative distinction arise – beauty, usefulness, order, fineness of workmanship, efficiency of function. True appreciation is possible only when insight accompanies sensibility. (12)

The *Report* claimed that appreciation was 'among the major aims of education' because it served to 'save children from the vulgarity so rampant in the world today, to introduce them to nature and her ways, to awaken sensitivity to beauty in all its forms [and] to develop the beginnings of insight' (12). Education developed appreciation by providing 'creative experiences' from which 'perceptions are quickened' and the 'power of enjoyment increased' as the child discovers and applies

techniques and principles associated with any art form. Ultimately by such processes, the child will develop 'some measure of aesthetic discrimination and judgement' (13).

The *Report* affirmed that good taste was more 'than mere sensitivity to beauty', because it

colours every emotion and affects every action in the life of the individual. Restraint, judgement, a love of simplicity, a sense of fitness, a liking for finish are all elements of a trained taste [...]. The child who likes clean shoes, good writing and well brushed hair is developing taste as well as the child who lies in the sun to watch the slow unfolding of the poppy. In the growth of taste nature has played, and will play a leading role. Her harmony of colour and pattern, the glory of her orchestras, the dignified deliberation of her growth, the secrecy of her most exquisite forms, her silences, her aloofness, her truth and her constancy, are in striking contrast to man's activities, with their clamour and hustle. (13)

Education is one of the processes which gradually induct the child into 'the world of values, utilitarian, aesthetic and moral; his understanding of sanctions and obligations; his appreciation of the meaning of value as a vital principle' (13).

Some of the Committee's language in this section of the *Report* reflected a Wordsworthian view of the revelatory power of nature ('the impulse from a vernal wood') and a Leavisite concern about the dominance of utilitarian values in an industrial world.<sup>35</sup> Inspector Amy Rowntree was a member of this Committee and influenced both the thinking and language of the document. In 1946, Rowntree delivered the annual J.A. Johnson Memorial Lecture in which she spoke of Carlyle and Herbert Read's views on education. Here, her ideas and language mirrored those in the *Report*. She spoke of the 'absence of spiritual self-expression in our schools', an absence that has 'turned men towards material values':

Instead of finding our joy in creations, we find it in collections, in amassing possessions, whether fur coats or dollar bills. It is only education in its widest sense, as *guided growth*, encouraged *expansion*, tender upbringing "that can secure that life is lived in its natural creative spontaneity, in all its sensuous, emotional, intellectual fullness". (127)

Perhaps reflecting Wordsworth's 'Shades of the prison-house', Rowntree expressed concern about the 'grip of the handcuffs of tradition and expediency' in education and the loss of culture 'in our machine age'.<sup>36</sup> Education's first responsibility was to

restore a civilization, the nature of which she defined in terms remarkably similar in nature to Leavis's 'organic community [and] the living culture it embodied' (*Culture and Environment* 1). For Rowntree, the true function of education was to

break the power of these war-mongering world-wreckers, and then seek to rebuild a secure civilization of true values where all may enjoy creative arts and spiritual culture. So far we have achieved only a vast low-level mediocrity: we have substituted the standard rose for the cottage garden, the satin eiderdown for the patchwork quilt, the blare of the radio for the whirr of the spinning-wheel, and a passion for glamour boys and girls for the friendship of birds and beasts. (138)

During the years immediately prior to the publication of the 1942 *Course of Instruction*, and subsequently, there is evidence that the teaching of poetry embraced some of these precepts and that the majority of inspection reports on this work began to reflect such principles.<sup>37</sup> Certainly from 1942, there was an increased emphasis on children's enjoyment of poetry reading and creative activities associated with poetry. Over several years, Inspector Miller's annual inspection reports stressed that children should enjoy poetry. To achieve this response, Miller believed that teachers 'must judge poems from the child's viewpoint', not their own, and should omit from their presentation 'grammatical references, etymological lectures, and historical annotations, and concentrate on the emotional and aesthetic aspects'. He also promoted the correlation of poetry with other subjects such as geography, history and nature study (*ER* august 1941, 126). Increasing numbers of inspectors' individual school reports contained observations about matters such as students being given opportunities to enjoy a 'wider free selection' of poems, a need for 'better discussion and interpretation' of themes and 'pleasing attempts at verse writing'.<sup>38</sup> An extract from Inspector Meston's 1946 report on high schools indicates the Department's new approaches to the teaching of poetry, and literature in general, in both the primary schools and junior grades of high schools:

The instruction in the past has often been too mature in matter and formal in method. In the future it should be more closely and fruitfully related to the actualities of what most girls and boys are capable of, and like, and need. In a few schools, too few alas, the introduction of verse-speaking has awakened an interest in a love of poetry that the traditional method of learning by heart almost completely failed to do. The prime function of the literature lesson is to make the pupils enjoy literature. Its appreciation is really a creative act. Words, music and associations are merely stimuli, the vision evoked is the child's own doing. Such creative enjoyment is the outcome of successful effort and requires the teacher's help for its initiation. (*ER* March 1947, 53)

Until 1946, the Department's only publications that informed teachers about classroom methods and teaching practice in general were the monthly issues of the *Educational Record* and the *Courses of Instruction*. In that year, the Department began publishing *Tasmanian Education*, a journal edited by the Curriculum Officer whose aim was to support curriculum implementation and foster professional dialogue among teachers. Both this journal and the *Record* published a variety of poems to encourage teachers to compile their own anthologies of poems for classroom reading, rather than rely entirely on those in the prescribed grade readers. Poems published in the *Record* for this purpose included: Alison Secor's 'Fire', chosen to link with lessons of forest protection; John Magee's 'High Flight'; Alfred Wheeler's 'A Vision'; H.R. Brodie's 'An Airman's Prayer'; Myrtle Burger's 'Give a Boy a Garden'; and a poem written by the Rev. Owen Lewis from Lindisfarne titled 'Australia, My Homeland'.<sup>39</sup> Those published in *Tasmanian Education* included Austin Dobson's 'The Song of the Sea Wind', H. Hoffman's 'The Little Boy that Cried', Harold Monro's 'Living', Herbert Asquith's 'Skating', Enid Blyton's 'A Foggy Day', Amy Lowell's 'Madonna of the Evening Flowers', Louis Untermeyer's 'Portrait of a Machine' and Carl Sandberg's 'Fog'.<sup>40</sup> The journal also included one teacher's description of her approach to teaching verse-speaking, a practice that increased in popularity in succeeding years and culminated in the appointment of Clive Sansom as Supervisor of Speech Education in 1950 (*Tasmanian Education*, December 1946, 14-5).<sup>41</sup> Approaches to individual and choral verse speaking embraced those concerns about children's speech that had preoccupied inspectors since the previous century, and replaced earlier practices of memorising and reciting poetry.

The Department encouraged teachers to include Australian literature in their English courses. The September 1939 issue of the *Educational Record* included a list of Australian books for schools, compiled by the Victorian Branch of the Fellowship of Australian Writers, 'in the hope that it will help teachers [...] arouse an interest in Australian literature' (131-2). The list included anthologies of poetry edited by Walter Murdoch and Percival Serle and collections of poetry by A.L. Gordon, A.B. Paterson, Henry Kendall, Henry Lawson, C.J. Dennis, Furnley Maurice, Bernard O'Dowd and Rex Ingamells. School broadcasts often featured poetry (for example, those advertised in the March 1943 issue of the *Record*, 57), and, in association with

these, the Department's Supervisor of Research (H.T. Parker) founded a student publication, 'Our Paper', to encourage 'the young folk to self-expression in verse and imaginative prose' (*ER* July 1940, 120).

Schools were encouraged to develop thematic schemes of work correlating subject content across the curriculum. One such scheme developed at Yolla Area School linked literature and the history and geography curriculum for grades 3 – 6. Poems selected to match this curriculum, apart from those in the *Tasmanian Readers*, included A.A. Milne's 'In the Fashion', Henry Newbolt's 'Drake's Drum', Frank Hudson's 'The Pioneers', the anonymous 'Little Jika Jika', Alfred Noyes's 'Sherwood', Conan Doyle's 'Song of the Bow' and John Masefield's 'Tewkesbury Road' for grades 3 and 4 (*Tasmanian Education* November 1949, 205-11); and John Sandes's 'The Old Pioneers', Robert Browning's 'Home Thoughts from Abroad', John Masefield's 'Cargoes', Elizabeth Browning's 'The Cry of the Children' and A.B. Paterson's 'The Man from Snowy River', for grades 5 and 6 (*Tasmanian Education* December 1949, 259-68).

Merit Examinations were abolished in 1938 and the external examining of prescribed poems from the *Tasmanian Readers* in the Qualifying Examination for high schools ceased. Teaching practices associated with poetry that developed in the 1940s were reflected in the new English curriculum for primary schools published in 1950. An important feature of the new curriculum was the introduction of a range of recommended texts for class reading in place of the single *Tasmanian Reader* for each grade. This action marked the demise of the *Tasmanian Readers* as prescribed class readers and the opportunity for teachers to replace these with texts such as *Heritage of Books*, *Gateway Readers*, *Joy in Reading*, *The Adventure of Reading* and *The Romance of Reading* (*ER* December 1951, 214).<sup>42</sup>

The fact that recommended readers such as these consisted almost entirely of prose confirmed the opportunity provided by the 1950 English curriculum for teachers to select their own poems for class reading and study. The curriculum stressed that the choice of 'suitable' poems was of 'paramount importance' and that the children should also be given opportunities to read poems 'of their own choosing'.<sup>43</sup> It recognised, therefore, the 'urgent need for a supply of suitable classroom

anthologies' and suggested that their contents should include 'short, simple ballads, lyrics, poems of action and descriptive poems' (23). Activities arising from poetry lessons were to be 'left to the choice of groups or individuals under the teacher's guidance' (14), but the curriculum suggested these could include 'miming and dramatizing' poems (9), copying and illustrating poems (11), compiling and illustrating personal anthologies (15), '[w]riting original verse for display in "Poet's Corner"' (18) and recitation (28). The curriculum continued to promote the memorisation and recitation of poems, but did not specify numbers of lines to be learnt, stating that the child 'should be encouraged to memorize as many lines of the poems taught which appeal to him' (10). Approaches to the teaching of poetry that were specified in the curriculum included the statement that children should not be 'forced' to memorise poems (23), and:

Careful attention *must* be paid to attractive speaking of lines, both by individuals and the class as a whole. Group verse speaking is an important means of encouraging diffident children to take a full part in the lesson. (15)

While the teacher's main purpose will be to lead the [grade 6] children to appreciate the beauty of each poem as a whole, it *will be necessary* to consider some of the elements which help to make this beauty, such as the music of the words and the imagery and rhythm of the poems. (28; emphasis added)

Words and phrases such as 'appeal', 'natural expression', 'enjoyment', 'encourage', 'individual interests' and 'genuine delight' dominated the discourse of this poetry syllabus, replacing earlier imagery relating to cultivation, feeding and precious stones. Appreciation of poetry was now closely associated with enjoyment and personal response, not in-depth analysis or feelings of reverence for some sacred artefact:

The treatment should aim, not only at widening the child's acquaintance with good poetry, but also at developing appreciation. Such activities as reading, reciting and dramatizing of poems, verse and choral speaking, will do more to achieve this than either detailed study of the printed word or the compulsory memorizing of poems. (22)



## Tables

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Poets and poems in the *Pacific Reader VI* and the *British Empire Reader VI*

POET	POEM	READER	PREVIOUS ENTRY
Aytoun, W.E.	'Edinburgh after Flodden'	BE	RR VI
Begbie, Harold	'Britons Beyond the Seas'	P	
Bowen, E.E.	'Forty Years On'	BE	
Browning, Robert	'Good News from Ghent to Aix'	P	NAR 4, RR V
Byron, Lord	'The Ocean'	P	ASR 5 (B&G), ASR 4, RR V
Chaucer, Geoffrey	'Chaucer's Good Counsel'	P	
Currie, A.E.	'Laudabunt Alii'	P	
Doyle, Conan	'The Frontier Line'	P	
Drayton, Michael	'The Arming of Pigwiggin'	P	
Emerson, R.W.	'Each and All'	P	
Hemans, Felicia	'The Spanish Champion'	P	RR V
Ingelow, Jean	'Winstanley'	P	
Kendall, Henry	'Heath from the Highlands'	BE	
Kingsley, Charles	'The Tide River'	P	
	'The Pleasant Isle of Aves'	BE	
Kipling, Rudyard	'The Ballad of East and West'	BE	
	'The Flowers'	P	
	'Recessional'	BE, P	
Longfellow, H.W.	'The Builders'	P	
Macauley, Thomas.	'Horatius'	BE	NAR 4, RR VI
Massey, Gerald	'Today and Tomorrow'	P	
Newbolt, Henry	'Vitai Lampada'	BE	
Paterson, A.B.	'The Wind's Message'	P	
Scott, Walter	'Patriotism' ('Breathed there a man')	BE	3 <sup>rd</sup> IR, NAR 4, RR IV, SP 1910
	'The Combat' ('Lady of the Lake')	P	NAR 4, RR V
Shakespeare, W.	'Orpheus with his lute'	BE	
	'Fear no more the heat of the sun'	BE	SP 1920
	'Blow, blow thou winter wind'	BE	SP 1910, 1920
	'It was a lover and his lass'	BE	SP 1920
	'The seven ages of man'	BE	NAR 5, RR VI
	'The Counsel of Polonius'	BE	
	'Henry IV's Soliloquy on Sleep'	BE, P	RR VI
	'Mercy'	P	B&FSS III
Shelley, P.B.	'The Recollection'	BE	SP 1920
Stevenson, R.L.	'The House Beautiful'	P	
Swinburne, A.C.	'Trafalgar Day'	P	
Tennyson, Alfred	'Sir Lancelot in the Lists'	BE	
	'New Year's Eve' ('Ring out ...')	BE	RR V
	'The Bugle Song'	P	SP 1910, 1920
	'Death of the Old Year'	P	

POET	POEM	READER	PREVIOUS ENTRY
<b>Whitman, Walt</b>	'A Sea-fight'	<i>BE</i>	
Wilde, Oscar	'Ave Imperatrix'	<i>P</i>	
<b>Wilson, Mrs J.G</b>	'Spring Afternoon in New Zealand'	<i>P</i>	

Poets and poems highlighted are those that appeared in previous readers. *AR* = *Australian Reader*; *IR* = *Irish Reader*; *NAR* = *New Australian School Series*; *RR* = *Royal Reader*; *SP* = *School Paper*.

## Poets represented most frequently in class readers 1900 – 1930

POET	NUMBER OF POEMS	NUMBER OF READERS	POEMS FEATURED MORE THAN ONCE
Shakespeare, William	23	5	'Winter' 'Dirge' 'Henry IV's Soliloquy on Sleep'
Longfellow, H.W.	19	6	'Santa Filomena' 'Children' 'Flowers'
Tennyson, Alfred	12	6	'The Bugle Song'
Shirley, Edward	11	3	
Kipling, Rudyard	8	4	'Recessional'
Stevenson, R.L.	8	3	
Shelley, P.B.	6	3	'The Pine Forest'
Burns, Robert	5	2	
Byron, Lord	5	4	
Paterson, A.B.	5	4	
Scott, Walter	5	3	'Patriotism'
Browning, Robert	4	4	
Campbell, Thomas	4	2	
Keats, John	4	2	
Kingsley, Henry	4	4	'A Christmas Carol'
Lowell, J.R.	4	3	'The Prince of Peace'
Mackay, Charles	4	2	
Outhwaite, Ida	4	1	
Rossetti, Christina	4	3	
Whittier, J.G.	4	3	
Wordsworth, William	4	2	
Hunt, Leigh	3	2	'About ben Adhem'
Kendall, Henry	3	3	
Macaulay, Thomas	3	3	
MacDonald, George	3	2	
Daley, Victor	3	2	
Emerson, R.W.	3	3	
Evans, George Essex	3	2	
Gale, Norman	3	2	
Setoun, Gabriel	3	1	
Stephens, Brunton	3	2	
Wilson, J. Glennie	3	2	

Poetry content of the 1933 editions of the *Tasmanian Readers III – VI*

READER	NO. LESSONS	NO. POEMS	% POETRY
III	61	12	20
IV	64	16	25
V	62	14	23
VI	50	20	40

Poets and poems in the first edition of the *Tasmanian Readers III – VI*

POET	POEM	PRIOR ENTRIES
Austin, Alfred	'In Praise of England' (V)	
Binyon, Laurence	'For the Fallen' (VI)	
Blake, William	'The Lamb' (III)	
Bowen, E.E.	'Willow the King' (III)	<i>SP V&amp;VI 1920</i>
Browning, Elizabeth	'A Musical Instrument' (VI)	
Byron, Lord	'Dest. of Sennacherib's Army' (V) 'The Ocean' (VI) 'The Coliseum' (VI)	<i>NAR 3, RR V</i> <i>AR 5 (B&amp;G), NAR 4, RR V, PR 6</i> <i>NAR 5</i>
Campbell, Thomas	'Battle of the Baltic' (V)	<i>RR V, History V</i>
Carleton, Caroline	'The Song of Australia' (III)	
Coleridge, S.T.	'Hymn in Vale of Chamouni' (VI)	<i>AR 5 (B), RR VI</i>
Cowper, William	'Lines by Alexander Selkirk' (IV) 'The Loss of the "Royal George"' (IV)	<i>3<sup>rd</sup> IR 1845, '51, '78</i> <i>RR IV</i>
Cuthbertson, J.L.	'The Australian Sunrise' (VI)	<i>SP IV 1910</i>
Daley, Victor	'A-Roving' (IV)	
Doyle, F.H.	'Loss of the "Birkenhead"' (IV)	
Dyson, Edward	'The Old Whim Horse' (V)	
Evans, G. Essex	'The Women of the West' (V) 'The Nation Builders' (V)	
Gordon, Adam L.	'A Dedication' (VI)	
Harte, Bret	'Dickens in Camp' (V)	<i>SP V&amp;VI 1920</i>
Howitt, Mary	'The Coming of Spring' (III)	
Hunt, Leigh	'Love Thy Neighbour' (V)	<i>NAR 4, SP V&amp;VI 1920, TSJ</i>
Ingelow, Jean	'Seven Times One' (IV)	
Keats, John	'Chapman's Homer' (VI) 'Ode to a Nightingale'	<i>NAR 5, SP V&amp;VI 1920</i>
Kendall, Henry	'Song of Shingle-Splitters' (III) 'The Last of his Tribe' (III) 'September in Australia' (VI)	<i>AR 3</i>
Kipling, Rudyard	'The Flowers' (VI)	<i>PR 6</i>
Knowles, Marion	'Where the Wattle Blooms' (III)	
Lawson, Henry	'The Teams' (III)	
Longfellow, H.W.	'Rain in Summer' (III) 'The Village Blacksmith' (III)  'A Fancy' (from 'Hiawatha') (IV) 'Paul Revere's Ride' (V) 'The Arsenal at Springfield' (VI)	<i>3<sup>rd</sup> Irish '78, AR 5 (B), NAR 3,</i> <i>RR IV</i>  <i>SP V&amp;VI 1910</i>
Lowell, J.R.	'The Fountain' (IV)	<i>AR 5 (B&amp;G)</i>
Masefield, John	'Roadways' (IV) 'Sea Fever' (IV) 'Cardigan Bay'	<i>SP III&amp;IV 1920</i>
Milton, John	'On His Blindness' (VI)	<i>5<sup>th</sup> IR, NAR 5</i>
Newbolt, Henry	'Vitai Lampada' (IV)	<i>BE 6</i>
Ogilvie, William H.	'The Drafting Gate' (IV)	

POET	POEM	PRIOR ENTRIES
<b>Paterson, A.B.</b>	'Over the Range' (III) 'Lost' (IV) <b>'Black Swans'</b> (VI)	<i>SP V&amp;VI 1910</i>
<b>Scott, Walter</b>	'Rosabelle' (V) <b>'Hunting Song'</b> (V)	<i>NAR 3</i>
<b>Shakespeare, W.</b>	<b>'In Praise of England'</b> (VI)	<i>NAR 5</i>
<b>Shelley, P.B.</b>	<b>'The Pine Forest'</b> (VI) 'The Skylark'	<i>SP V&amp;VI 1920, BE 6</i>
<b>Taylor, Jane &amp; Ann</b>	'Birds, Beasts and Fishes' (III)	
<b>Tennyson, Alfred</b>	<b>'Break, Break, Break'</b> (IV) 'The Lady of Shalott' (V) 'The "Revenge"' (V) 'The Passing of Arthur' (VI) 'A Vision' (from 'Locksley Hall') (VI) 'Ulysses' (VI)	<i>SP V&amp;VI 1910</i>
<b>Wagner, John H.</b>	'An Australian Cradle Song' (IV)	
<b>Wordsworth, W.</b>	<b>'The Daffodils'</b> (IV) 'The Solitary Reaper' (VI)	<i>NAR 3, SP V&amp;VI 1910</i>

Poems and poets highlighted are those that appeared in earlier readers. Roman numerals in the second column indicate the grade of the reader in which the poems appeared.

*AR = Australian Reader; BE = British Empire Reader; IR = Irish Lesson Book; NAR = New Australian Reading Series; PR = Pacific Reader; RR = Royal Reader; SP = School Papers.*

Poetry content of the revised editions of the *Tasmanian Readers III - VI*

READER	NO. LESSONS	NO. POEMS	% POETRY
III - 1940	63 (61)	21 (12)	33 (20)
IV - 1941	62 (64)	16 (16)	26 (25)
V - 1940	70 (62)	22 (14)	31 (23)
VI - 1941	51 (50)	21 (20)	41 (40)

Numbers and percentages in parenthesis refer to the poetry content of the first editions of the *Tasmanian Readers*.

Poets and poems from the first editions of the *Tasmanian Readers III – VI* that were not included in the revised editions of these readers

POET	POEM	READER
<b>Austin, Alfred</b>	'In Praise of England'	V
Blake, William	'The Lamb'	III
Byron, Lord	'The Coliseum'	VI
<b>Bowen, E.E.</b>	'Willow the King'	III
<b>Campbell, Thomas</b>	'Battle of the Baltic'	V
<b>Carleton, C.J.</b>	'Song of Australia'	III
Cowper, William	'Lines by Alexander Selkirk'	IV
Evans, G. Essex	'The Nation Builders'	V
Gordon, Adam L.	'A Dedication'	VI
<b>Harte, Bret</b>	'Dickens in Camp'	V
<b>Howitt, Mary</b>	'The Coming of Spring'	III
Kendall, Henry	'The Last of his Tribe'	III
<b>Knowles, Marion</b>	'Where the Wattle Blooms'	III
<b>Lawson, Henry</b>	'The Teams'	III
Longfellow, H.W.	'Rain in Summer'	III
	'The Village Blacksmith'	III
Paterson, A.B.	'Over the Range'	III
Scott, Walter	'Rosabelle'	V
<b>Taylor, Jane &amp; Ann</b>	'Birds, Beasts and Fishes'	III

Poets highlighted are those who had no poems included in the revised editions of the *Tasmanian Readers*.



Poets and poems in the revised editions of the *Tasmanian Readers III - VI*

POET	POEM	PRIOR ENTRIES
Anon	'The Ant and the Cricket' (III)	RR III
Binyon, Laurence	'For the Fallen' (VI)	
Blake, William	'The Tiger' (V)	
Browning, Elizabeth	'A Musical Instrument' (VI)	
Byron, Lord	'Dest. of Sennacherib's Army' (V) 'The Ocean' (VI)  'The Dying Gladiator' (VI)	NAR 3, RR V AR 4, AR 5 (B&G), RR V, PR 6
Carroll, Lewis	'A-sitting on a Gate' (V)	
Coleridge, S.T.	'Hymn in Vale of Chamouni' (VI)	AR 5 (B), RR VI
Cowper, William	'Loss of the "Royal George"' (IV)	RR IV
Cross, Zora	'When I was Six' (III)	
Cunningham, Allan	'Song of the Sea' (V)	
Cuthbertson, J.L.	'The Australian Sunrise' (VI) 'The Bush' (III)	SP 1910
Daley, Victor	'A-Roving' (IV)	
Davies, William H.	'Leisure' (V)	
de la Mare, Walter	'Nicholas Nye' (III) 'Silver' (III)	
Doyle, F.H.	'Loss of the "Birkenhead"' (IV)	
Dyson, Edward	'The Old Whim Horse' (V)	
Esson, Louis	'The Shearer's Wife' (III)	
Evans, G. Essex	'Women of the West' (V)	
Field, Eugene	'The Night Wind' (III)	
Gordon, Adam L.	'By Wood and Wold' (III) 'Ye Wearie Wayfarer' (V) 'The Sick Stockrider' (VI)	
Hebblethwaite, James	'Wanderers' (III)	
Hogg, James	'The Skylark' (V)	
Hood, Thomas	'The Dream Fairy' (III)	
Hunt, Leigh	'Love Thy Neighbour' (V)	NAR 4
Ingelow, Jean	'Seven Times One' (IV)	SP 1920
'Jan'	'Gollywog' (III)	
Keats, John	'Chapman's Homer' (VI) 'Ode to a Nightingale' (VI)	NAR 5
Kendall, Henry	'Song of Shingle-Splitters' (IV) 'September in Australia' (VI)	
Kipling, Rudyard	'The Flowers' (VI) 'A Smuggler's Song' (V)	PR 6
Lang, Andrew	'The Song of the Scythe' (V)	
Longfellow, H.W.	'A Fancy' (IV) 'Paul Revere's Ride' (V) 'The Arsenal at Springfield' (VI)	SP 1910
Lowell, J.R.	'The Fountain' (IV)	ASR 5 (B&G)
Lucas, E.V.	'The Cricket Ball Sings' (V)	
Mackellar, Dorothea	'My Country' (V)	
Masefield, John	'Roadways' (IV) 'Sea Fever' (IV) 'Cardigan Bay'	SP 1920
Millard, Edith	'Fire Fairies' (III)	
Milton, John	'On His Blindness' (VI)	5 <sup>th</sup> IR, NAR 5

POET	POEM	PRIOR ENTRIES
<b>Morin, Catherine</b>	<b>'The Night Wind' (III)</b>	
Newbolt, Henry	'Vitai Lampada' (IV)	<i>BE 6</i>
Ogilvie, William H.	'The Drafting Gate' (IV)	
Paterson, A.B.	'Lost' (IV) 'Clancy of the Overflow' (V) 'Black Swans' (VI)	<i>SP 1910</i>
<b>Rands, W.B.</b>	<b>'The Pedlar's Caravan' (III)</b>	
<b>Rentoul, Annie</b>	<b>'The Little Mia-Mia' (III)</b>	
<b>Rossetti, Christina</b>	<b>'The Swallow' (III)</b>	
Scott, Walter	'My Native Land' (V)  'Hunting Song' (V)	<i>3<sup>rd</sup> IR 1845, '78, NAR 4, RR IV, SP 1910, BE 6 NAR 3</i>
Shakespeare, W.	'In Praise of England' (VI)	<i>NAR 5</i>
Shelley, P.B.	'The Pine Forest' (VI) 'The Skylark' (VI)	<i>SP 1920, BE 6</i>
<b>Smyth, B.G.</b>	<b>'The Care of a Garden' (III)</b>	
<b>Southey, Robert</b>	<b>'After Blenheim' (V)</b>	<i>3<sup>rd</sup> IR 1845, AR 3</i>
<b>Stevenson, R.L.</b>	<b>'From a Railway Carriage' (III)</b> <b>'The Land of Story Books' (III)</b>	
Tennyson, Alfred	'The Bee and the Flower' (III) 'The Eagle' (III) 'Break, Break, Break' (IV) 'The Lady of Shalott' (V) 'The "Revenge"' (V) 'The Passing of Arthur' (VI) 'A Vision' ('Locksley Hall') (VI) 'Ulysses' (VI)	<i>SP 1910</i>
Wagner, John H.	'An Australian Cradle Song' (IV)	<i>SP 1920</i>
Wordsworth, W.	'The Daffodils' (IV) 'The Solitary Reaper' (VI)	<i>NAR 3, SP 1910</i>
<b>Yeats, William B.</b>	<b>'The Lake Isle of Innisfree' (V)</b>	

Poets and poems highlighted are those included in the *Tasmanian Readers* for the first time. Roman numerals in parenthesis in the second column refer to the grade of the reader in which the poems appeared. *AR* = Australian Reader; *BE* = British Empire Reader; *IR* = Irish Reader; *NAR* = New Australian School Series; *PR* = Pacific Reader; *RR* = Royal Reader; *SP* = School Paper.

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## Notes

<sup>1</sup> Morris records that the programming of daily lessons was 'taken more seriously' during McCoy's period of leadership, and that the 'distribution of specimen programmes prepared and printed by the Department helped one to systematise work' (20).

<sup>2</sup> 'Intermediate high schools' were established at both Burnie and Devonport in 1916. These offered only two years of secondary education. Devonport High School became a four-year high school in 1919 (Phillips 129).

<sup>3</sup> The entry and training requirements for teacher-trainees were published in the *Educational Record* (July 1913): 14. Further references to the *Educational Record* are abbreviated *ER* and appear in the text, in parenthesis.

<sup>4</sup> Eighteen years later, 106 student teachers were listed as having passed Teachers' College examinations (*Educational Record* [March 1930]: 48-9).

<sup>5</sup> By February 1922, meetings were being held for teachers to discuss the revised course, and a suggested timetable to accommodate the course requirements had been published (*ER* [February 1922]: 44-5).

<sup>6</sup> Time allocated to poetry remained the same as that for the 1911 *Course of Instruction*: two fifteen-minute lessons weekly for all classes except grade 6 where four fifteen-minute lessons were allocated. The total allocated time for English lessons (reading, transcription, dictation, word-building, oral and written language, sentence structure and grammar, and poetry) was eleven and a half hours per week. Reading and oral and written language comprised just over half of the total time allocation.

<sup>7</sup> The *Course of Instruction* (1924): 8. Further quotations from this document appear in the text, in parenthesis. The 1911 *Course of Instruction* prefaced the number of lines to be learnt with the word 'about'.

<sup>8</sup> *Paradise Lost Book 5* line 625 (Newton 156).

<sup>9</sup> 'Bliss was it in that dawn [...]' from *The Prelude* Book 9 (de Selincourt 108); and from the same poem:

Even forms and substances are circumfused  
By that transparent veil with light divine;  
And, through the turnings intricate of verse,  
Present themselves as objects recognised,  
In flashes, and with glory not their own. (Book 5, de Selincourt 603)

<sup>10</sup> 'Appreciation, both aesthetic and moral, seems often to come as a subtle dawn or sudden flash.' is a direct quote from the opening paragraph of chapter I: 1. Hayward refers to the poetry of Milton and Wordsworth in his chapters 'The Final View of the Lesson' (91-8) and 'The Polemics of Appreciation' (178-202).

<sup>11</sup> A new program for primary school music was published in March 1927 (*ER* [March 1927]: 53-5).

<sup>12</sup> The 1929 *Revised Course of Instruction* substituted the term 'grade' for 'class' and renumbered the preparatory and I-VI classes from Grades I (in lieu of prep.) to VII. This policy was soon abandoned in favour of preparatory grade and grades I-VI. To avoid confusion, I have used these grade numbers (using Arabic numerals) in the description of the 1929 *Revised Course of Instruction*.

<sup>13</sup> Page references for quotations from the 1929 *Course of Instruction for the Primary Schools* appear in the text, in parenthesis.

<sup>14</sup> For the preparatory class, the heading 'Oral Language' was substituted for 'Language'.

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<sup>15</sup> The passage is drawn from Chubb's chapter 4: 48-9.

<sup>16</sup> Beavis discusses this issue, as it applied to the teaching of poetry in Victoria (24-5).

<sup>17</sup> Details of these two examinations were published in the *Educational Record* of January 1926 (30) and August 1927 (106-7).

<sup>18</sup> There are exceptions to this claim. *Pacific Readers* were used in some schools as early as 1922, but the 1924 *Course of Instruction* confirmed their use as prescribed readers for all senior primary classes. *British Empire Readers* were first used in some schools in 1927.

<sup>19</sup> The preface to this reader is not paginated.

<sup>20</sup> One prose reading not included in this count is 'Winstanley', in which extracts from Jean Ingelow's poem are used to illustrate the account of the erection of the Eddystone Lighthouse in the English Channel.

<sup>21</sup> The following analysis of the *Empire* and *Pacific Readers* is restricted to the senior (grade 6) book in both series.

<sup>22</sup> The percentage for the *Pacific Readers* includes 5 poems printed at the end of the book under the heading 'Additional Poetry for Recitation'.

<sup>23</sup> Three of Longfellow's poems, however, were included in the fifth readers, 'My Lost Youth' in the *British Empire Reader* and 'The Norman Baron' and 'The Ladder of St. Augustine' in the *Pacific Reader*.

<sup>24</sup> Mrs James Glenny Wilson (*née* Adams) was born at Greenvale, Victoria in 1848. Following her marriage, she moved to New Zealand and most of her poetry was written in that country. Morris Miller lists her in his *Bibliography*.

<sup>25</sup> For the purpose of this argument, all the infant class readers (that is the two *Tasmanian Primers*, the *Tasmanian Readers I* and *II* and the poems Amy Rowntree published in issues of the 1921 *Educational Record*) are classed as one reader. To consider them as separate entities would skew the figures unduly in favour of poems for infant classes.

<sup>26</sup> The fourth *Tasmanian Reader*, for example, acknowledges 'The Education Department, Adelaide' and 'The Education Department, Melbourne' as sources for some of the prose extracts, Angus and Robertson for permission to publish poems by Lawson, Paterson and other Australian poets, and overseas publishers including Longmans and Heinemann for permission to publish poems by writers such as Ingelow and Masfield. Longmans is also acknowledged for a prose passage taken from the publisher's *The Heritage of Books III*.

<sup>27</sup> Austin, Binyon, Doyle and Wagner had poems included either in editions of the *School Papers* other than those for 1910 and 1920, or the fifth books of the *Empire* and *Pacific Readers*. Dyson did not appear in copies of texts available for sighting.

<sup>28</sup> Poems by some of these writers had been included in editions of the *School Papers*, other than those for 1910 and 1920.

<sup>29</sup> This claim is not strictly true, as Carleton's poem had appeared in the 1910 grade 3 *School Paper*, set to music. As such, it was probably not regarded as a poem, or included in reading lessons.

<sup>30</sup> Poems by many of these, however, had appeared in other issues of the *School Papers* apart from 1910 and 1920, for example Lewis Carroll, Allan Cunningham, W.H. Davies and James Hebblethwaite. Annie Rentoul appeared in previous readers as Ida Rentoul Outhwaite.

<sup>31</sup> Here, the prescribed readers do not include *School Papers* other than those for 1910 and 1920. Poems by at least 12 of these poets had been published in other issues of the *School Papers*.

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<sup>32</sup> A further demonstration of the need to choose poetry appropriate to children's level of understanding is the transfer of Kendall's 'Song of the Shingle-Splitters' from the grade 3 to the grade 4 reader, and Byron's 'The Ocean' from the grade 5 to the grade 6 reader.

<sup>33</sup> 'Curriculum Revision: Some Fundamental Principles Necessary in Curriculum Construction'. Supplement to the *Educational Record* (October 1934): 1-2. Further quotations from this document appear in the text, in parenthesis.

<sup>34</sup> 'Course of Instruction for Primary Schools: English (Grades III-VI) 1942. 3. Further quotations from this Course appear in the text, in parenthesis.

<sup>35</sup> The quotation is from Wordsworth's 'The Tables Turned' (de Selincourt 377). For a brief summary of Leavis' response to the industrial world see Bergonzi's *Exploding English* 50.

<sup>36</sup> 'Ode. Intimations of Immortality'. Stanza V line 10 (de Selincourt 460).

<sup>37</sup> As late as 1946, however, some inspection reports had changed little from those of the 1930s. Inspector Lay, for example, described the teaching of poetry in schools of the Western District as follows:

In the main, poems are suitably selected, well memorised, and clearly spoken, with best interpretation in the junior grades, where facial expression and gesture add greatly to the child's enjoyment of the piece. Generally a satisfactory appreciation is shown. (*ER* February 1946, 43)

<sup>38</sup> Reports on Goulburn Street (1945), Rubicon Bridge (1946) and Bothwell (1946) schools respectively (AOT ED 31).

<sup>39</sup> In order, these poems appeared in the following issues of the *Educational Record*: July 1942 (99); August 1942 (111); November 1942 (143); April 1943 (71); August 1943 (105); June 1944 (83).

<sup>40</sup> In order, these poems appeared in the following issues of *Tasmanian Education*: December 1946 (15), September 1946 (5), May 1946 (21), July 1946 (12), April 1946 (15).

<sup>41</sup> Clive Sansom's appointment was announced in the Department's Annual Report to Parliament, 1950 (*J&PP* 145, 1951-2, Paper 34: 5).

<sup>42</sup> Because the Department experienced problems obtaining sufficient copies of some of these readers, the first two became the established readers for grades 2 - 4 and the *Tasmanian Readers* continued to be used in grades 5 and 6 until 1955.

<sup>43</sup> *Curriculum for Primary Schools: English* (1950): 10-11. References for other quotations from this document appear in the text, in parenthesis.

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## **4: POETRY IN SECONDARY AND TERTIARY EDUCATION 1900 - 1950**



State Government high schools opened at Hobart and Launceston in 1913. All grade 6 pupils who passed a 'Qualifying examination' were eligible to enrol for secondary studies at these schools. The Department's Regulation 206 stated that the high schools could provide five courses of study:

- (a) A course for pupils preparing for the teaching profession:
- (b) A general course for four years' work leading to the University:
- (c) A commercial course for pupils preparing for business careers:
- (d) A technical course for pupils preparing for industrial careers:
- (e) A domestic course for girls.<sup>1</sup>

To meet the needs of these courses, the high school curriculum comprised twenty-two subjects ranging from English, geography, history, mathematics, four languages and several science subjects, to a number of 'specialist' subjects such as 'theory of education', 'business principles and correspondence', 'manual work' and 'sanitary science and hygiene' (*ER* December 1913, Supplement 18). The study of English was compulsory in all five courses.<sup>2</sup>

The Education Department issued its own internal Intermediate and Leaving Certificates to successful pupils at the end of the second and fourth years respectively. Both certificates were awarded on the basis of regular school attendance and satisfactory study in all subjects of the particular course undertaken. Satisfactory study for the Intermediate Certificate included achieving passes in at least five subjects in the University's Junior Public Examination (JPE), and, for the Leaving Certificate, five subjects in the University's Senior Public examination (SPE) (*ER* September 1912, 52). Pupils were not promoted from second to third year classes unless they had gained the Intermediate Certificate. The syllabus requirements for the University's JPE and SPE external examinations, therefore, controlled, to a considerable extent, the high school curriculum and the methods of its teaching. In contrast to the primary school sector, it was only late in this period that any sequentially structured English curriculum for secondary schools was published and implemented, and this, too, was framed within the context of external certification requirements.<sup>3</sup> The Education Department monitored closely pupils' performances in these external examinations, and school inspectors' annual reports invariably included summaries of pupil achievements in both the JPE and SPE.<sup>4</sup>

From one point of view, this was a simpler method of supervision and control than that which operated in primary schools, where courses of instruction, compulsory texts and twice-yearly inspections imposed accountability on teachers and schools. But it was an equally, if not more, effective method of supervision, because the measure of schools' achievements, based on JPE and SPE results, was a common yardstick imposed externally and reported on publicly. And because the University either exercised complete control of the public examinations, or was the major player in defining their syllabuses and assessing students' work, both schools and teachers were responding to an authority other than the Education Department. A further significant aspect of control exercised by the University in secondary education was the fact that all teachers in high schools had to be graduates, or undertake tertiary studies to complete their degrees within a stipulated period of time while working in schools.<sup>5</sup> They acquired much of their knowledge of subject disciplines and methods of teaching them from University staff.<sup>6</sup>

For the first two decades of the century, therefore, the English curriculum in secondary schools was governed by the requirements of the Junior and Senior Public English Examinations. In 1922, the Junior and Senior Public Certificates were renamed the Intermediate and Leaving Certificates and the former ceased to function after 1939. The University controlled these examinations.<sup>7</sup> Further certification changes occurred in 1944 when an Education Act established the independent Schools Board of Tasmania to be responsible for syllabuses and examinations for the Schools Board Certificate, awarded at the end of four years secondary schooling, and Matriculation, awarded at the end of the fifth year. The Professor of English at the time, Albert Booth Taylor, was appointed Chairman of the Board and Chief Examiner in English. In these positions, his influence on secondary English studies was significant.

### **The Junior Public Examinations 1900 – 1926**

Changing approaches to the poetry studied and its method of teaching in the Junior and Senior Public examinations are illustrated by comparing the syllabuses and examinations in the first years of the century with those students such as Joyce Eyre (subsequently a high school teacher and then a lecturer in English at the University)

undertook at Launceston High School in the 1920s. Until 1910, the University published the formal requirements for the JPE English examination as follows:

**ENGLISH GRAMMAR, INCLUDING DICTATION.**

Parsing, analysis of sentences, and general questions: a short composition on a given subject; writing from Dictation.

*Book recommended:* West's English Grammar for Beginners (Pitt Press).<sup>8</sup>

Poetry featured frequently in the examination papers during the first decade of the century, but only as material to test students' ability to parse, analyse and paraphrase; poetry was not taught or examined for purposes of literary study and appreciation. The 1902 JPE English paper, for example, consisted of 5 questions, 4 of which provided poetry extracts to test students' grammatical and language skills. Question 2 included 4 lines of verse from 2 poems for analysis. Question 3 expected the students to parse the italicised words from 1 of these poems. An extract from Goldsmith formed part of question 2, with those words italicised that students had to parse as their response to question 3:

**2. Analyse:-**

"Beside yon straggling fence that skirts the way,  
With blossomed furze unprofitably gay,  
There, in his noisy mansion skilled to rule,  
The *village master taught* his little school." (1903, 35)

Question 4 provided 16 lines from Scott's *The Lady of the Lake* which candidates were instructed to paraphrase: 'that is, rewrite *in prose* and in *your own words*' (1903, 35). The examiner was surprised at the 'large number of candidates [who] did not know the meaning of the word *prose*' (1903, 29).

The study of poetry as a literary form was not included in the JPE curriculum until 1910 when Palgrave's *The Children's Treasury of Lyric Poetry* was prescribed. There were two English examination papers at the end of that year. One was an exercise in dictation and the other contained 8 questions covering poetry, grammar and composition. Seven of the questions referred to poetry, 3 of them using short extracts from Rudyard Kipling and William Cowper's poems to test skills of analysis and parsing and the ability to change 'direct speech in the First Person to indirect narration in the Third Person'. The remaining 4 questions indicated that the students that year had memorised poetry, studied the content and imagery of the poems, and learnt about the lives of the poets:

3. Write out from your prescribed poems:-

- (1) Two stanzas, beginning with –  
“The flames rolled on – he would not go”
- (2) Two stanzas, beginning with –  
“No nightingale did ever chaunt”
- (3) Three stanzas, beginning with –  
“The Assyrian came down like the wolf”

4. (a) Referring to question 3, write a few sentences about each of the three poems from which you have been quoting, mentioning one or two facts about the author of each, his or her life, or works.

(b) Referring to the third extract, write a few sentences in explanation of the four similes that occur in it, and show how each helps to make clearer and more vivid the picture the poet wishes you to see with your “mind’s eye”.

5. Explain briefly the following extracts, and write some account of the poems from which they are taken.

[Three extracts each of four lines were provided]

6. Write out in paraphrase, or in *précis*, the story told in “The Loss of the Birkenhead.” (1911, 8-9)

These four questions constituted half of the examination paper. Although the paper provided no information about the allocation of marks for each question, it is obvious that overall success in the examination depended on candidates’ ability to answer the poetry questions satisfactorily.

From this time, the prescribed literature texts for the JPE usually included a poetry anthology, a Shakespearean play and a novel. The poetry prescribed between 1910 and 1924 included the Palgrave selection mentioned above and other collections such as *The Poet’s Realm*, edited by H.B. Browne and *Selections from English Literature* edited by Elizabeth Lee.<sup>9</sup> Single longer poems were prescribed in 1919 (Tennyson’s ‘Morte D’Arthur’), 1923 (a section from Scott’s *The Lady of the Lake*) and 1924 (Coleridge’s ‘Rime of the Ancient Mariner’). The University’s prescriptions for the Intermediate examination in 1922 (formerly the JPE) indicated that the major change that had occurred in the English syllabus at this level was an increased emphasis on the study of literature, with less focus on aspects such as word derivations in its study. The syllabus requirements were divided in two sections:

#### I. GRAMMAR AND COMPOSITION

The Grammar comprises accidence and rules of syntax, full parsing of moderate difficulty, general analysis and synthesis of sentences. The

Composition includes an essay of about two pages of ordinary writing.  
Simple scansion from the set books.

## II. LITERATURE.

1. One play of Shakespeare. Questions on textual criticism and derivations will not be set.
2. General literature: a novel; a book of selections of poetry or a narrative poem; another simple prose book may be added.

*Books prescribed: 1922.*

Shakespeare: *Henry V.*

Dickens: *A Tale of Two Cities.* (1922, 8)

The Intermediate English examination taken by Joyce Eyre in 1924 consisted of two papers. The first tested grammar, essay writing and Shakespeare's *The Merchant of Venice*, and all questions were compulsory. In the second paper students had to answer the questions on Coleridge's 'Rime of the Ancient Mariner', those on a set of essays titled *Alpha of the Plough*, and the questions on one of three novels: Brontë's *Shirley*, Scott's *Quentin Durward* and Kingsley's *Westward Ho!* Five of the seven questions on *The Merchant of Venice* were in the traditional mode, using the text as a means to test candidates' knowledge of vocabulary and allusions and their ability to analyse sentences, parse words, explain grammatical structures and scan lines of verse. Candidates also had to write from memory two specified passages, each of about twelve lines in length. Only one question provided candidates with the opportunity to demonstrate knowledge of the plot and theme of the play:

What is the important connection of the Lorenzo Jessica story with the main drift of the drama? (1925, 2)

In the second examination, however, questions on Coleridge's poem focussed entirely on narrative, theme and imagery, and candidates' responses to aspects of the poem:

1. Give in outline what you consider to be the significance of each of the following passages in indicating to the reader the mystery shrouding the story of the Ancient Mariner:-

- (i) We were the first that ever burst  
Into that silent sea.
- (ii) The Night-mare Life-in-Death was she,  
Who thicks man's blood with cold
- (iii) That moment that his face I see  
I know the man that must hear me.

What impression did the story of the *Ancient Mariner* make on you when you first read it?

2. (a) Connect the story of the killing of the Albatross with the lines –

- “He prayeth best, who loveth best  
All things both great and small.”
- (b) Discuss the aptness of the simile in the verse –
- “Day after day, day after day,  
We stuck, nor breath, nor motion:  
As idle as a painted ship  
Upon a painted ocean.” (1-2)

At this level of examination in Tasmania, these questions are two of the earliest examples where texts were examined as literature and candidates' personal responses were sought. As such, it contrasts markedly with the JPE English examinations a decade earlier.<sup>10</sup> Again, however, the priority given to poetry (including Shakespeare) meant that students had to perform satisfactorily on these questions, if they were to pass the examination.

### **The Senior Public Examination 1900-1926**<sup>11</sup>

Poetry was prescribed annually for the Senior Public Examination from 1901, except in 1905 and 1906 when only drama and prose works were studied. For seven years between 1901 and 1925, selected works of one poet were studied and examined: Macaulay (1901), Tennyson (1902, 1907, 1916), Milton (1903, 1904) and Arnold (1908).<sup>12</sup> In 1920, nominated works of four poets were prescribed: Byron (Canto III of *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage*), Goldsmith (selections from *The Traveller* and *The Deserted Village*), and a selection of sonnets by Milton and Wordsworth. Anthologies of poems were prescribed for study in all other years, the prescriptions, in most cases, specifying particular poets and poems from the collections. Eleven anthologies were prescribed during this period, the most popular being *Lyra Heroica* (1910, 1917, 1918), Palgrave's *Golden Treasury* (1921, 1925) and Johnson and Fletcher's *Selections of Prose and Verse* (1923, 1924).<sup>13</sup> From this time until the late 1940s, it was common practice to base the study of poetry on an anthology, rather than the work of a single poet or several poets. None of the anthologies prescribed between 1909 and 1925 contained Australian poetry, and some anthologies, such as *Lyra Heroica* (for the three years listed above), *Lyra Historica* (1914), *Poems of Action* (1915) and *English Patriotic Poetry* (1913) were chosen apparently because of their relevance to the First World War. One of the questions on the 1917 examination paper asked candidates to discuss the extent to which Whitman's poem

‘Beat! Beat! Drums!’ and Stevenson’s ‘Mother and Son’ could be applied ‘to the present state of war’.<sup>14</sup>

There were significant differences in the methods of examining poetry at this level between 1908 and 1926. In the former year, a separate examination paper examined the poetry of Matthew Arnold. Its six questions were compulsory and tested candidates’ ability to quote accurately from memory two verses of ‘The Scholar Gypsy’ and the ‘Sonnet on Quiet Work’, their ability to explain the derivation and meaning of words from the poems, such as ‘minion’ and ‘unkempt’, and to explain the meaning and context of quoted passages from five of Arnold’s poems. Questions 3 and 5 on the paper made other demands on candidates’ knowledge and abilities:

3. Give an account of the mythology as it appears in “Balder Dead,” showing especially the Scandinavian view of the origin and end of the universe and of a future state. Are there any points of similarity to any other heathen mythology?

5. Arnold held that a poet should deal with actions “which most powerfully appeal to the great primary human affections, to those elementary feelings which subsist permanently in the race.”

Does Sohrab and Rustum comply with this condition, and if so, in what way? (SPEM 1908, 1)

The first of these questions reflects the traditional historical approach to the study of the language of literary texts, and the testing of factual knowledge obtained from commentaries or teachers. In contrast, question 5 is an early example of questions providing scope for students to present and support a point of view, an opportunity for discussion usually denied them when examining literature at this time. It is also one of the first examples of a style of questioning which the report *The Teaching of English in England* recommended: ‘that which [...] offers a criticism and asks the candidate to confirm or refute it from the evidence of his own reading’ (305). And the final question on the paper was an early example of an open-ended question encouraging candidates to express and support a personal point of view:

Of the passages to be committed to memory, write the first five lines of that which you consider the finest, and give the reasons for your preference. (SPEM 1908, 1)

The examiner’s report on the performance of students in this examination noted that although 15 of the 64 candidates had failed the poetry paper, the majority knew the texts well and ‘the memory work was excellent’ (SPEM 1908, 39).

Questions such as these heralded four important changes in the methods of teaching and examining poetry at this level during the next fifteen years. In its 'Details of Subjects' for 1910, the University announced that from that time candidates would be asked questions on the 'subject-matter and *literary qualities* of the [...] prescribed books' (*Calendar* 1909, 141; emphasis added.). Although examiners continued their practice of expecting candidates to identify the writers and contexts of extracts from poems, retell events from narrative poems, and define literary terms, some of their poetry questions from this time expected candidates to discuss the works as literature. In contrast to earlier approaches, the first of the following examples of such questions insists that candidates demonstrate knowledge independent of that provided by the set text:

In the introduction to the selections from Tennyson attention is called to the poet's power of pictorial effect and of making the sound of the verse fit the sense. Give instances of each other than those used by the editors. (*SPEM* 1916, 1)

Name the five poems about *birds* and their authors. Comment on the different methods in which the poets concerned have treated their subject. (*SPEM* 1921, 2)

Several questions during these years attempted to focus students' attention on special qualities of the poetic form and the function of the poet:

Henley says in his note on Milton's *Lycidas*: "It is, indeed, an example as perfect as exists of Milton's capacity for turning whatever he touched into pure poetry: an arrangement, that is, of 'the best words in the best order'; or, to go still further than Coleridge, the best words in the prescribed or inevitable sequence that makes the arrangement art."

Do you think that these words adequately define pure poetry? (*SPEM* 1918, 2)

Write a one page essay on *one only* of the following subjects: -

(a) The true Poet is ever, as of old, the Seer.

(b) The Thought is parent of the Deed, nay is living soul of it.

(*SPEM* 1920, 2)

The most significant change in examining poetry during this period, however, was the recognition of candidates' own responses to, and opinions about, the poetry studied. The majority of examination papers from 1909 included at least one question that acknowledged the presence of the candidate, while at the same time expecting evidence of diligent study:



Distinguish the poems on The Skylark by Wordsworth, Shelley and Hogg, indicating, with reasons, your own preference. (*SPEM* 1909, 2)

Mention, with quotations to illustrate your statements, some of the characteristics of the old ballads, and explain why you find these ballads interesting. (*SPEM* 1911, 1)

(a) Give in your own words the substance of *either* Ozymandios of Egypt *or* The Scholar. Name author.

(b) Name and briefly give the substance of a poem among those set which you have enjoyed. Name also a poem which you did *not* enjoy reading, and give reasons. (*SPEM* 1921, 2)

The final question on the second English examination paper for 1920 encouraged candidates to be creative, albeit within set limits:

When you have finished all you can do of the previous questions, but not before, try your hand at a stanza in the metre of Childe Harold, choosing as a theme any subject which the canto you have studied suggests to you. Thus the downfall of Germany, or of the German emperor, or praise of some river in Tasmania, or the heights of Gallipoli might occur to one. The marks given to the answer of this question will be grace marks, over and above the 150 marks allotted to the paper. (*SPEM* 1920, 3)

The examiner commented that it ‘was not very kind, and perhaps not very wise, to ask candidates to drop into verse at the end of a long paper’, and noted that few candidates had successfully attempted the task. The question had, however, revealed ‘a fact of some significance to teachers’: candidates had studied ‘Childe Harold’, yet ‘still have no idea of the metre in which it is written’ (111).

Despite these developments, most examiners’ reports continued to focus on candidates’ knowledge of the texts studied and the structure and style of their responses to the examination questions. In 1916, however, one examiner noted how effectively answers to questions on the literary qualities of the texts ‘made a sharp defining line between good and bad candidates’ (*SPEM* 56). Such questions featured more regularly in senior secondary examinations from that time, and became common practice in the 1930s and 40s. During this period, examiners’ reports were more detailed and significant, due largely to the influence of the Chief Examiner.

### Leaving Certificate English

A.B. Taylor was appointed to the Chair of English at the University in 1926 and assumed responsibility for examining Leaving Certificate English. Poetry questions

in that year's examination illustrated his approach to the teaching of poetry. The first of the two examination papers tested students' essay-writing abilities, and their memory work, scanning and language skills. The second paper contained a compulsory question on Shakespeare's *Richard II*, four poetry questions and two on the novel. Thus poetry continued to enjoy a status higher than that accorded other forms of literature studied. This examination paper's poetry questions did not require candidates to write passages from memory, or to demonstrate knowledge of word derivation or meaning. The questions did place greater emphasis on poetry as a literary genre, and the examiner used the word 'appreciation' for the first time at this level of study. In his examination report, Taylor stated that every question 'was intended as a test of thinking powers as well as knowledge', and noted that questions 3 and 5 'were intended as a test of candidates' literary appreciation' (SPEM 1926, 1). Question 3 asked candidates to discuss both poetry and prose as literary genres. They could respond to one of two parts to this question. The first part was:

"Poetry is the music of language." "In poetic language the sound must suggest the meaning." "Verse-form is not the only, or even an essential difference between poetry and prose." Comment on the above statements, (illustrating from your reading), by contrasting such works as Wordsworth's *Sonnets* and *Lines Written above Tintern Abbey*, *Lochiel's Warning*, *Ode to a Nightingale*, *Dream Children*, and *The English Mail-Coach* with essays like Carlyle's on *Labour* and *Shakespeare* and Southey's *Nelson's Attack on Vera Cruz*. (2)

The second part of the question posed a similar challenge:

The Prose writer *explains* his ideas to us. The poet *presents* them in a series of pictures. Illustrate this contrast from the works of *Carlyle*, *Keats* and *Shelley*. Reference may be made to any other literature which you have read. (2)

The first alternative in question 5 asked candidates to write 'an appreciation of the artistic skill (or poetic craftsmanship) of either *Keats* or *Shelley*' (2). The other poetry questions expected candidates to define the term 'Romantic Movement' and contrast Wordsworth and Coleridge's attitude towards it, to explain and provide examples of terms such as sonnet, Spenserian stanza, lyric and blank verse, and to show how cited lines from Wordsworth and Byron 'sum up the character of the work of the poet' (2).

Of the 197 candidates who sat the examination, 22 gained credits and 30 failed. This was to be one of the lowest failure rates in examinations at this level for many years. Taylor was pleased with students' answers:

There were a large number of really good papers and a smaller number of failures than in any one year's group which I have ever examined. It seems quite obvious that in most schools the candidates themselves and the teachers in charge of them have worked hard and conscientiously. Most candidates displayed great ability in expressing themselves in good fluent English, as well as showing good intelligence in tackling the various questions [...]. It was a pleasant surprise to find a number of candidates who had not only read outside the ordinary school curriculum, but were also able to make use of this reading in answering the questions. (21)

Taylor continued to employ this style of poetry questioning in the public examinations for the next twenty-five years, but the quality of students' responses to the questions and what these suggested about the teaching and study of poetry in secondary schools caused him increasing concern.

### **The Intermediate Certificate 1926 – 1950**

As Chief Examiner for the Intermediate (until its abolition in 1939) and Leaving Examinations, Taylor was vigorous in addressing his concerns about the study of poetry in schools. He undertook this task with a missionary zeal equal to that of Neale at the beginning of the century, and in a manner that accorded with the *Report on the Teaching of English in England's* description of the professor of literature as an 'ambassador of poetry' and 'a missionary in a more real and active sense than any of his colleagues' (259).

Most of the poetry studied for the Intermediate examinations during these years was narrative. Poets who featured in the examination prescriptions more than once, and an example of one of their poems prescribed, were: Tennyson (*Idylls of the King*), Arnold ('Sohrab and Rustum'), Browning ('The Lost Leader'), Keats ('The Eve of St Agnes') and Coleridge ('The Ancient Mariner'). Scott's *The Lay of the Last Minstrel* and William Morris's *The Man Born to be King* were prescribed works in 1927 and 1929 respectively. A popular anthology for some years in the 1930s was volume five of the Oxford series *English Verse*, edited by W. Peacock. J. Stable's *The Bond of Poetry* was the prescribed text in 1938 and Kendall's 'September in Australia' and 'Bell-Birds' were included among the poems set for study in that year.

Taylor's poetry questions in the Intermediate examinations tested students' ability to read poetry closely, and understand poetic techniques and structure, and how these elements enhanced theme and purpose. Although the 1927 examination paper contained several questions on Scott's *The Lay of the Last Minstrel* that demanded knowledge of the content only, one focussed on the significance of metre, and another asked students to assess the effectiveness of verse structure, diction and imagery in cited passages. Taylor's very detailed examiner's report on candidates' performance acknowledged that these two questions were included to 'give scope to those candidates who had been thoroughly taught the principles of poetic craftsmanship', and noted that they 'were badly answered and many candidates were unwise in attempting them'.<sup>15</sup>

Taylor's work in this area can be seen as an attempt to educate teachers as well as students, and to change the approach to poetry teaching in schools. His comments about the paper included the following:

The majority did not know that rhythm and rhyme are two distinct terms but used them as synonyms to such an extent that answers to questions 7 and 8 [those referred to above] were often completely unintelligible [...]. Most candidates who attempted to use technical metrical terms offered a glorious chaos which would have defied Milton's powers to describe. Candidates need know no technical terms at all, and it is probably unwise to teach any but a few simple terms, because when candidates begin larding their answers with tetrameters, trimeters, trochees, dactyls, etc., they frequently ruin the effect of statements which are good and sound. (PE 18)

Taylor continued to set questions such as these in the Intermediate examination until its demise at the end of the next decade. One question on the 1929 paper provided six extracts from Morris's *The Man Born to be King* and asked candidates to '[c]onsider carefully the craftsmanship [...] and state which you consider good and which bad, giving reasons for your opinion in every case' (PE 2). He found that very few candidates 'were able to distinguish the bad passages' (12) and took the opportunity to attack the syllabus sub-committee's prescription of the poem.

"The Man Born to be King" should never have been prescribed; it is not poetry at all, but very second-rate verse, with a large proportion of sheer doggerel. The sub-committee must take the blame for this. About all that could be taught to children from it was how poetry should not be written. (13)

For several years following the abolition of the Intermediate Certificate, the Association of Public Schools and the Education Department awarded separate certificates to mark students' successful completion of four years of secondary education.<sup>16</sup> A single fourth-year secondary certificate for all Tasmanian students operated when the Schools Board of Tasmania was established in 1945.<sup>17</sup> The certificate was awarded either on the basis of success in external examinations or by a school accreditation process controlled by the Board. Taylor was appointed Chairman of the Board and of its committee responsible for external examinations, and also served as a member of the English syllabus and examination committees.

From 1946, the Schools Board prescribed texts for the annual external examinations for fourth-year English Expression and English Literature and also published a syllabus for the first three years. Each year's syllabus comprised a study of drama, prose and poetry and a list of prose works for extensive reading. The poetry for the first three years was based on recommended anthologies such as *The Poet's Way I, II and III*, *The Dragon Book of Verse* and *The Bond of Poetry*, and included the reading of some Australian verse. Poetry study in fourth-year was based on an 'anthology of lyrical and shorter narrative verse, including some Australian poetry' and a 'longer narrative poem such as *The Ancient Mariner*, *Sohrab and Rustum*, one of the *Idylls of the King*, *A Dream of Fair Women*, *Mazeppa's Ride*, and the *Rhyme of Joyous Garde*, one of the tales from the *Earthly Paradise*, and the *Deserted Village*' (*SBM* 1949, 28).

The one compulsory question in the fourth-year external literature examination was an unseen poem. Students' responses to this were guided by several questions such as those in the 1947 examination:

Suggest a suitable title.

What similarity between the picture presented in the first four stanzas and that in the last three links them together?

Does the poem leave us happy or sad? Give reasons.

Choose either stanza 3 or stanza 4 and discuss the poet's skill in making us see, hear and feel. (*SBM* 1947, 2)

Other poetry questions in that examination included two based on 'Sohrab and Rustum', and the following:

Identify *four* of the following passages, state briefly the subjects of the

poems in which they occur, and show in a few words the relation of each passage to the work of which it forms a part. [Seven passages were provided.]

Choose a poem by *one* of the following authors, state its theme, and discuss its poetic quality:- Robert Herrick, Harold Munro, Coventry Patmore, Lionel Johnson, Walter de la Mare. (*SBM* 1947, 2)

The examiner reported that few candidates attempted the last of these questions, that candidates had a good knowledge of the passages to be identified, but that their response to the unseen poem was 'disappointing'. Answers 'lacked comprehension and a sense of imagery', and contained 'much ambiguity, with glib references to poetic devices and onomatopoeia without understanding the meaning of either' (*SBM* 1948, 2).

Changes in the methods of examining poetry at this level since the beginning of the century included the introduction of questions based on unseen poems, an increase in the choice of questions available to candidates, and a sharp decrease in questions expecting them to write out extended passages of memorised poetry. A more significant change lay in what was actually examined in poetry, particularly the emphasis on close reading for understanding of both content and style. Taylor's methods of examining poetry during this period were influenced by current writings on 'critical method' and the need to foster discrimination as an essential aspect of the study of English (Mathieson 127). The questions Taylor set in the examinations, his comments on students' performance and what these revealed about contemporary teaching practice indicated his knowledge of the work of I.A. Richards, in particular Richards's *Principles of Literary Criticism* (1924) and *Practical Criticism* (1929). Taylor's approach mirrored Richards's search for 'educational methods more efficient than those we use now in developing discrimination and the power to understand what we hear and read' so to properly appreciate 'good poetry' (*Practical Criticism* 3, 351). He would have been aware, too, of concerns closer to home about the need to foster sound judgments and values in literary appreciation espoused, for example, in T.G. Tucker's *The Judgement and Appreciation of Literature* (1926). Taylor's personal library included a copy of Alfred Noyes's *Some Aspects of Modern Poetry*, and his pencil markings against certain passages indicate his particular interest in 'the characteristics that differentiate poetry from prose', qualities of 'cadence', and 'those laws of song which have remained constant from Homer to the

present day, and are, in fact, natural laws of harmony, order, and proportion' (45, 47, 51). Noyes affirms that poets are not slaves to convention, but find freedom in their 'joyous acceptance of the arduous laws of their art' (124); he believes that contemporary moves to abandon such 'fixed and central principles' as these laws, have 'led to an appalling lack of discrimination', and literary judgements that 'have become purely arbitrary' (267).<sup>18</sup>

### **Leaving Certificate English 1926 – 1950** <sup>19</sup>

These and related concerns influenced Taylor's work as examiner of Leaving Certificate English. From the 1930s, the nature of the examination of poetry for the Leaving Certificate settled into an established pattern. Each year's examination contained a question asking candidates to either write explanatory comments on selected lines from five or six of the poems, or to explain the italicised passages in these selections. Sometimes the poems from which the extracts were taken were identified, often not. In some respects these questions were similar in style to those set by Williams at the beginning of the century, but most important now was the relevance of the passage, phrase or single word to the poem from which they were cited. Although classical allusions and figurative language did not escape the examiner's attention, questions about such features expected candidates to relate them to the poem's subject matter and theme.

Questions of this nature were usually placed first on the poetry paper to test students' general knowledge of poetic form and their ability to read poems closely. Taylor's comments about the results of students' work provided insight into his purpose for examining poetry in this manner. He expected precision and focus in responses, not 'slovenliness' and 'rambling interpretations of the whole poem' (*PE* 1934, 68). In 1935, Taylor stated that the majority of students could not fulfil his requirements for close reading. He wrote that many candidates

dish up a vague commentary on the whole poems [...] from which the passage has been extracted. Others try to worm their way through my defences by praising the author and assuring me that it is a magnificent passage, but candidates must be told that my answer, like the station-master is "no admittance till you come better furnished". (*PE* 1935, 64)

On another occasion, when commenting on students' responses to a question requiring explanatory notes on an extract from Shelley, Taylor warned teachers of

the need 'to define carefully the variant meanings of the word 'nature' to pupils', commenting that many candidates used the term 'as a sort of emotional gush, or as if it were a magic passport to the examiner's favour', and that they 'spill the word all over their answers in ecstasies of hope' (*PE* 1934, 68). In 1940, he wrote that responses to two lines from Wordsworth's 'Ode to Duty' showed that candidates 'had no knowledge of the meaning of the lines and wrote utter nonsense', and that their discussion of lines from Milton's 'On His Blindness' 'revealed that a great number of present day school children have little acquaintance with the New Testament' (*PE* 1940, 33).

Taylor's approaches to examining poetry reveal the influence of the New Criticism. Close reading and detailed textual analysis of the poetry studied were more important than the lives of the poets, their sources, or the political and social implications of their work. Taylor continued to employ this form of questioning until the late forties, making what appeared to be increasingly desperate efforts to focus candidates' attention on the required task. During these years, separate and very specific questions were posed for each quoted extract, most of these seeking the relevance of the extract to the subject matter of the poem, or asking for the meaning and aptness of the imagery of italicised passages, or expecting comments about the verse form. Despite these detailed instructions, the results were poor, the examiner recording in his 1941 report: 'no candidate who attempted the question can be said to have successfully studied any of the poems from which the last five extracts were taken' (*PE* 34). From 1947, this style of question was replaced with essay questions on specific poets or poems.

The practice of studying nominated works by a range of poets for the Leaving Certificate in the 1920s was abandoned during the next decade, when the scope was restricted to three poets in most years. In the 1940s, this scope was restricted further to the study of the works of two poets. Poets prescribed in the 1930s included Alexander Pope, John Keats and Alfred Tennyson (1932), John Milton, P.B. Shelley and Robert Browning (1934), Geoffrey Chaucer, John Dryden and S.T. Coleridge (1935), Milton, Thomas Gray and Byron (1936), and Pope, Wordsworth and Matthew Arnold (1937). While candidates were expected to be able to compare the work of some of these poets, there were now more questions focussing solely on the



works of individual poets. Each examination paper during these decades had at least one question, and increasingly more than one, devoted to one poet's work. These questions could be narrow in focus, or demand a more general knowledge of poetic form, or a poet's philosophy. For example, in the 1932 paper candidates had a choice of either quoting the first two stanzas of Keats's 'Ode to Autumn' and discussing in detail the appropriateness of the imagery to the subject, or illustrating from *The Rape of the Lock* the chief features of mock-heroic poetry. Several questions in the 1940 paper indicate the range of approaches adopted:

"Both L'Allegro and Il Penseroso illustrate Milton's love of natural beauty and of country life." Show the truth of this.

Discuss the suitability of the sonnet as a medium for expressing emotion. Illustrate from the sonnets you have studied this year.

Discuss Wordsworth's belief that power, wisdom and virtue pass from Nature to man if he will but attend to her. (PE 1940, 2)

Taylor continued to examine students' understanding of the function of poetry. One of the questions in the 1938 paper asked candidates to discuss the claim, 'The poet's task is to make beauty', and to illustrate their answer by referring to Keats's poetry. A question on the essay form in 1940 could have surprised many candidates: 'State with reasons which essay has the better claim to be regarded as poetry, *Birth of a Cloud* or *Penguins*' (3). Taylor found that their answers 'were often mere descriptions of the essays [...]. Of those who attempted a reasoned answer it was disappointing to find that the majority regarded poetry and verse as synonymous terms' (PE 1938, 33). Many questions focussed on the qualities of poetic language. One of the questions on the 1941 examination paper asked candidates to provide a brief account of the story of 'St. Agnes' Eve' and 'show clearly what is lost by retelling it in simple prose' (PE 4). And in other years similar questions expected candidates to discuss the impact of poets' diction and imagery:

"This is the typical business of poetry; that under the spell of the poet's words our minds are not merely understanding the poet but are actually sharing an imaginative experience with him."

Illustrate from either *Ode to a Nightingale* or the *Ode to a Grecian Urn*. (PE 1944, 3)

"A poet's aim is to pass on to us the kind of pleasure – including of course painful pleasure – that he has received." Discuss the extent to which Keats has achieved this in one of his odes.<sup>20</sup>

During this period, Taylor addressed the issue of students' ability to respond to poetry and answer questions on it. In 1933, when 100 of the 230 candidates failed the subject, Taylor reported that 'very few candidates made satisfactory attempts' to answer questions in which they had to either compare the moods of passages from *Paradise Lost* Book III, 'Ode to the West Wind' and 'Home Thoughts from Abroad', or the poetic diction of *Adonais* and 'The Epistle of Karshish'. He wrote:

It may be that the poems prescribed were too difficult, it may be that a number of teachers lack the ability to arouse an interest in poets, or it may be that many candidates cannot appreciate good poetry. If the last named suggestion is correct, some candidates every year must fail in English who are fitted to undertake a university course in some non-literary studies [...]. (PE 77)

In the following year, when 192 candidates sat the exam and 31% of them failed, he commented:

After some years of experience I am inclined to think that about one third of the candidates or more profit very little from poetic study, and this year I intend to propose some amendments designed to make only a portion of our present English studies compulsory for certificates and matriculation. (PE 68)

There is no evidence that he pursued this matter immediately, or that changes were made to the content and format of the examination papers for the next ten years, but several developments in the structure and content of Higher School Certificate English syllabuses in the last decades of the twentieth century appear to support his point of view.<sup>21</sup> Taylor did, however, use his examination reports to advise and consult with teachers about various aspects of the syllabus design and content. In 1937, he wrote:

The answers of most candidates showed that 'The Rape of the Lock' was far more difficult than the poems of Wordsworth and Arnold. In fact, one candidate [...] castigated in very frank terms both those who call it poetry and those who were so misguided as to prescribe it for school-study. (Presumably one considered me responsible for this, if not for the former "fallacy" also). I like frankness, but was obliged, reluctantly, to give her answer no marks, since it did not fit the question. I would ask teachers to consider whether the poem is not too difficult for school-study. (PE 72)

The poem was not prescribed again. Thirty-nine per cent of candidates failed the subject in that year.

Taylor returned to this concern about the teaching of poetry and students' response to this genre in 1938:

The answers of the best candidates showed, that in some schools at least, the teaching of the prescribed literature was very thorough, and that some teachers had very successfully imbued their ablest pupils with a keen appreciation of Keats's poetry and even of Shelley's *Adonais* – a very difficult poem for students of this age. There are, of course, many boys – and perhaps some girls too – who are impervious to the appeal of poetry, whose imagination cannot be galvanized into activity by the most skilled or enthusiastic teachers. Indeed, there was a Tasmanian headmaster who once confided to me his opinion that any Australian boy who likes poetry must have something wrong with him. Unfortunately, many of these candidates [...] tried to answer questions [...] which demanded some appreciation of poetic art. Their answers revealed that they were what that headmaster would call 100% normal Australian boys, and the marks earned by their answers were in accordance with that normality. (*PE* 56)<sup>22</sup>

Changes in the methods of examining poetry during the 1940s addressed some of the problems Taylor had identified in his examination reports. The canon of poets studied changed significantly. Spenser, Macaulay and Dryden had been absent from the list of poets for study for some years and, in the late 1930s and early 40s, Pope, Chaucer, Gray, Francis Thompson and Swinburne were removed. As noted above, from now on only two poets were listed for study each year (apart from 1948) and these were in order of frequency Shelley (4 times), Keats, Browning and Wordsworth (3 times) and Milton, Arnold and Byron each twice. The choice of poetry questions was extended. In 1944, for example, students were required to answer 3 questions from a choice of nine. From 1942, it was no longer compulsory for students to memorise a set number of lines and to write these out in the examination. Questions requiring candidates to compare aspects of the work of different poets became a rarity. One exception in the 1940s was question five on the 1942 paper asking candidates to compare the religious opinions of Milton and Shelley as expressed in their poetry (*PE* 3). Despite these modifications, Taylor maintained his high expectations of students and marked their examination papers accordingly.

Failure rates on the English papers continued to be around the 30% mark, until 1945 and 1946 when they were approximately 45% and 40% respectively. Three hundred and forty-eight candidates presented for the Literature examination in 1945, and 382

in 1946, the highest number since the examination was introduced. The examiner's comments about candidates' responses to the poetry questions in 1946 tell a story similar to that of the past two decades:

The impression gained from reading the answers submitted was that the great majority of candidates had neither learnt to regard a poem as a whole, nor to appreciate the writer's intention. Nor did one feel that their experience had been enriched to any appreciable extent by a study of English Literature.  
(MM 66)

It is no surprise, then, that a separate English Expression subject for matriculation was introduced at this time. The examination in this subject tested essay writing, précis and paraphrase. At the same time, the Literature examination syllabus was expanded to include modern drama and non-fiction, in addition to poetry, Shakespeare and the novel. The numbers of candidates in English Literature dropped dramatically, in fact halved for the next few years. At the same time, relatively small numbers sat the Expression examination, after the first flush of enthusiasm when 160 students sat the exam in 1948 and 30% failed. Thirty-five per cent of the candidates failed English Expression in 1949, and 46% in 1950. Despite the reduced numbers studying English Literature, the failure rate continued to be high: 22% in 1948, 38% in 1949 and 22% in 1950.

Taylor was in his final years as Chief Examiner of English when I studied Matriculation English Literature in 1953. A comparison of Matriculation English in that year with the subject as it was structured, taught and examined in Joyce Eyre's Leaving Year (1926) highlights the changes in the emphasis given to poetry and the methods of examining it over two decades. The subject Joyce Eyre studied in 1926 was titled 'English' and comprised personal essay writing, a study of the history of the language, Shakespeare's *Richard II* (from which 200 lines as nominated in the syllabus had to be learnt by heart), the poetry from the set text (*Selections of Prose and Verse* edited by Johnson and Fletcher) and one of three novels (Masefield's *Lost Endeavour*, Dickens's *Our Mutual Friend* and *Over Bemerton's* by E.V. Lucas). Candidates sat two three-hour examinations and most of the literary texts were tested in the second of these. In 1953, Matriculation English was divided into two discrete subjects, Expression and Literature. Neither subject was compulsory for entry to the university, providing that candidates had achieved pass standard in English

Expression at fourth-year School Certificate level. The Matriculation English Literature syllabus that I studied comprised Shakespeare's *Antony and Cleopatra*, a selection of poetry from the anthology *Fifteen Poets*, Shaw's *St Joan*, and one of the following prose works: Lamb's *Essays of Elia*, Austen's *Pride and Prejudice*, Conrad's *Typhoon* and a collection of short stories, *English Short Stories of Today*.

The main differences between the 1926 and 1953 syllabuses were the earlier requirement to study the history of the language and the inclusion of modern drama in 1953. Traditional poets were studied in both years. Joyce Eyre was examined on the poetry of Spenser, Wordsworth, Coleridge, Keats, Shelley and Byron; I was examined on the poetry of Milton, Gray, Wordsworth, Francis Thompson, Chaucer and Dryden. There were differences in the examination requirements, however. Poetry was examined more extensively and with fewer choices in 1926. Joyce Eyre was compelled to answer at least four questions on poetry and these expected her to know of Wordsworth and Coleridge's attitude towards the Romantic Movement in English poetry, be able to distinguish between features of prose and poetry and illustrate this ability by referring to the set texts, to demonstrate a knowledge of poetic forms, and write about the artistic skill and general character of the work of one of the prescribed poets. Joyce Eyre and her contemporaries were expected to have a wider knowledge of the works of specific poets than were students in 1953. The 1953 Literature examination paper contained three poetry questions, two with alternative parts. These questions and a further three on Shakespeare's *Antony and Cleopatra* comprised part A of the examination paper, from which candidates had to answer three questions. Instructions required students to answer at least one question on poetry, at most two. Part B consisted of ten questions on the prose and modern drama texts, of which students answered no more than two. The possibility of failing the examination because of an inability to respond to poetry questions adequately was far less likely in 1953 than in 1926.

The knowledge of poetry expected in the 1953 examination was arguably as detailed as that expected in Joyce Eyre's year, but it was more closely focussed on the themes and form of specified poems, fewer in number than those studied in 1926. One of the questions, for example, asked students to define an ode, illustrating their response with close reference to Dryden's 'Alexander's Feast' by 'making a careful analysis

of the development of theme, the form and structure of the poem and its diction', and identifying any other poems studied which could be described as odes, giving reasons for the choice (MM 1953, 2). Other questions made similar demands about individual poems by Milton, Gray and Wordsworth. Comparison was a feature of the poetry questions, one question asking students to compare Wordsworth's 'The Happy Warrior' with Chaucer's knight and seeking their opinion about the poems' appeal and interest (2), and the other:

Compare Milton's "*On the Morning of Christ's Nativity*" and Thompson's "*The Hound of Heaven*," particularly as expressions of religious feeling, but considering also the form, diction and imagery of the two poems. (MM 1953, 1)

In the early 1950s, therefore, the study of poetry played a less prominent part in Literature studies. Taylor's earlier concerns about numbers of students failing the subject because of their inability to 'appreciate good poetry' had been addressed by increasing the range of literary genres studied and examined. There were changes also in the nature of examining poetry. Questions now focussed specifically on the poems set for study rather than on historical movements in poetry, poetic terms and the general qualities of the language and form of the genre. Common to the whole period was the emphasis on understanding, critical appreciation and response, rather than on creative activity.

Neither the 1926 nor the 1953 examination syllabuses included Australian literature, although Australian prose was included in some syllabuses during the 1930s and 40s. With only two exceptions, no Australian poetry was examined at the secondary certificate level until the second half of the twentieth century.<sup>23</sup> The exceptions were the prescription of J. Stable's *The Bond of Poetry* at the Leaving level in 1927 and the Intermediate level in 1938. Two questions in the 1938 Intermediate examination paper sought responses to Kendall's poetry, although poor proof reading of the paper must have confused some candidates: 'Give in your own words Henry Lawson's praise of the bell-birds'. The other question asked for the context and meaning of the opening four lines of Kendall's 'September in Australia' (PE 1938, 2).

The narrative and descriptive poems in Stable's anthology were prescribed for the 1927 Leaving examination, but not the poems of patriotism in the final section of the

editor's collection. The examiners overlooked this omission when compiling the question paper, and set a question using poems from this section that asked candidates to show how particular English, Scottish and Australian poems illustrated 'the spirit and character of the three nations for which they were composed' (*PE* 1927, 2). An extract from Brunton Stephens's 'The Dominion of Australia' was also included in a number of extracts in question 8 which candidates had to consider from the point of view of 'poetic workmanship', and place 'in what you think is their order of merit' (3), an instruction reflecting I.A. Richards's influence. In March 1928, the supplementary Leaving Examination contained two questions based on poems in *The Bond of Poetry*. Both were alternative questions. Question 3 read: 'Which of the poems in *The Bond of Poetry* do you consider most truly representative of Australia? Name not more than three and give reasons for your choice'. Question 5 asked candidates to describe 'the different attitude towards the sea expressed in the following poems, quoting or referring to passages where possible:- 'The Song of the Surf' (Gordon), 'The Sands of Dee' (Kingsley), 'The Ocean' (Byron), 'A Song of the Sea' (Procter)'.<sup>24</sup>

The absence of Australian poetry from the Higher School Certificate syllabuses during this period was compensated to some extent by its compulsory inclusion in the School Certificate syllabuses during the 1940s and its introduction to the University's English III course in 1946. The poetry section of the School Certificate English syllabus in that decade included the study of one major narrative poem and an 'anthology of lyrical poetry and shorter narrative verse, including some Australian poetry' (*Schools Board Manual* 1949, 28). Two poetry anthologies were prescribed in 1950, the first was identified as the 'Laurel and Gold Modern Anthology (Collins)', and the second was Australian, and printed in the syllabus as follows:

"New Song in an Old Land", ed. Rex Ingamells (Longman)

Study from Parts I and III poems by the following:-

O'Dowd, Ingamells, Mudie, Neilson, Hunt-Smith, Grano, McRae  
Moodie Heddle.

from Part II poems by:-

Lawson, Gordon, Paterson ("Clancy of the Overflow" only), Kendall.  
(*SBM* 1949, 3)

The study of Australian poetry featured in an innovative third-year unit of English at the university from 1946 for the remainder of the decade, a unit of work designed and taught by Joyce Eyre.

The public and educational status of the secondary certification procedures accorded considerable power to those responsible for their oversight. Examiners wielded authority and influence as significant as that exercised by school inspectors in primary schools. Consequently, William Henry Williams, until 1925, and A.B. Taylor, from 1926 until 1946, initiated and sanctioned approaches to the teaching of poetry in Tasmanian high schools. And Taylor's appointment as Chief Examiner of English with the Schools Board of Tasmania, from its inception in 1946, meant that his influence on poetry teaching practices continued until he vacated the position in the early 1950s.

The Education Department appointed C.E. Fletcher Inspector of High Schools in 1917. He addressed aspects of the teaching of English in his annual inspection reports, but appeared to recognise the authority and expertise of University personnel by commenting rarely on the certification syllabuses or teaching procedures at these levels. His reports usually addressed other facets of the subject, such as oral work, recitation and teaching practices in junior secondary classes. His comments were often very similar to those of his primary colleagues and couched in language redolent of the discourse of earlier years. Correct speech, effective recitation, and comprehension and appreciation of good literature were his major concerns:

English teaching should secure that pupils can use their mother tongue and that they are supplied with a body of cultural material which will serve as food for thought and mould their opinions and ways of thinking. At no time can care of pupils' speech be omitted, for such is liable to become carelessly articulated, faultily enunciated, replete with slanginess of expression and painfully limited in vocabulary [...]. Recitation of passages committed to memory not only demands these qualities, but in addition an apter emphasis and a meaningful tone which indicate that their purport has been thoroughly comprehended [...]. In literary study the attitude of the teacher to the passages under review means much if a sympathetic appreciation and clarity of understanding are to be gained by pupils. Texts to be studied in class are representatives of English classics, and the teaching should result in an incitement to intelligent reading. (*ER* March 1922, 57)



Two years later, Inspector Fletcher's annual report on English gave the highest priority to the development of students' 'correct, clear and fluent speech'. He recommended that special 'drill work in phonetics' be undertaken each day. He stressed the importance of giving students opportunities to discuss the 'plot, character, incident and style' of literary texts, and noted that 'the principles of artistic criticism need to be well taught' (*ER* May 1924, 66). Fletcher's 1927 report again focussed on improving students' speech and on the recitation of verse, but included recommendations about aspects of the teaching of poetry in junior classes:

Recitation was still rather moderate in amount, but at one school in particular, the repetition was decidedly pleasing, dramatic and finished. Quotations sympathetically learned at school become an abiding pleasure and joy for pupils in later life, and contribute their quota to the formulation of noblest ideals [...]. Elements of prosody are to be taught in first-year classes, and pupils should learn to recognize variations of rhythmic movement and grow conscious of the music of verse [...]. The usual metres and the commoner figures of speech must be known and their *raison d'être* understood. To be able to state that a certain figure is a simile is something, but it advances knowledge little, and appreciation less. Pupils should learn to know why it is used, to see its fitness to enter into its imaginative atmosphere, and to realize its beauty, as these are the matters of prime consideration. (*ER* February 1927, 39)

The inspector's references to 'intelligent reading' and teaching the principles of 'artistic criticism' would have appealed to Taylor and, in fact, may have resulted from the impact of his examiner's reports on the performance of Intermediate and Leaving Certificate candidates.

### **Extending the poetry canon at the University: 1900 – 1950**

William Henry Williams held the Chair of English until his retirement at the end of 1925. He made no significant changes to the University's English course prescriptions, or to his methods of teaching and examining of poetry throughout these years. Saintsbury and Gosse's texts continued to provide the historical outlines of the literary periods studied in English I and II and to govern the poets studied and responses to their work. Students replicated this information in their answers to examination questions. They had little opportunity to express their own opinions, argue a case that had not been part of their reading, or engage personally with the poetry. Questions from the November 1910 examinations are identical in intent to those set in the first decade of the University's existence, as illustrated by the

following from the section of the English I paper headed 'History of Elizabethan Literature':

Give the titles of the chief collections of sonnets published between 1593 and 1596, with the names of the authors. (b) Describe the literary characteristics of any three. (c) Assign the following lines to their context:

1. O clear-eyed rector of the holy hill.
2. Since there's no help, come let us kiss and part.
3. My lady's presence makes the roses red.<sup>25</sup>

A sound knowledge of Gosse's history of the period would have equipped English II students to perform well on other questions, such as:

"Towards the close of Pope's career, a distinct change began to come over the face of English poetry." Explain and illustrate. (*UHE* 1910, 19)

Sketch the life of Goldsmith, with special reference to such incidents as throw light on his character. (*UHE* 1910, 19)

This style of questioning was again evident in the 1922 examinations. Works by poets such as Spenser and Dryden were exercises in memory and language analysis. Question 3 of the English I paper asked candidates to discuss *The Faery Queene's* 'scheme', '[s]tanza and language', and the poem's 'influence on English Literature' and to name four other works by Spenser (1). English II students had to write 'short notes on all words and phrases [...] requiring comment and explanation' in five passages from Dryden's *Satires* (*UHE* 1922, 1), answer similar questions on passages from Pope and explain allusions in a number of lines of verse (2-3). In English III, Chaucer's works continued to be taught and examined as texts for philological study. Such were the tertiary English studies undertaken by the generation of teachers who taught Joyce Eyre secondary English at Launceston High School in the 1920s and who, in many cases, subsequently became either leading teachers of English, or senior officers of the Department during my years as a secondary student.<sup>26</sup>

Albert Booth Taylor succeeded Williams in the Chair of English at the beginning of 1926 (Fig.11). Taylor was born in England, but his family moved to New Zealand where he pursued undergraduate studies at Auckland University College. During World War I, he served for a period in the New Zealand Expeditionary Force in Egypt and France, and subsequently, as a Rhodes Scholar, studied at Oxford, gaining First Class Honours in English (Davis 90).<sup>27</sup> Before assuming his position at the



Fig. 11. Professor Albert Booth Taylor, MA (Oxon).  
Professor of English at the University of Tasmania 1926 – 1956.

University of Tasmania, Taylor lectured in English at Leeds University from November 1920 to September 1921, and then at the University of Durham until December 1925.<sup>28</sup> He served as Professor of English in Tasmania until 1956.

Table 31 lists the major topics that constituted the work in the three-year undergraduate program in English for the years 1910, 1930 and 1950, together with the reference texts prescribed to support particular courses.<sup>29</sup> The 1910 program confirms that Williams continued the emphasis on the history of language and literature from Chaucer to the end of the eighteenth century that he had begun in the early 1890s. This program remained unchanged until Williams retired in 1925. Table 31 also illustrates the changes Taylor introduced to the English courses in the early years of his position, particularly in English I, and shows how these initial changes had resulted in a totally restructured program by 1950. By that year, linguistics had replaced the history of language, literary criticism was central to the program, the study of literature and language were separate and discrete subjects in English II, and students were offered a range of units from which to select their third-year program of three units. Students could take a 'double major' in English, by studying English IIA and IIB and then six of the seven third year units. These optional and specialist units of study would not have been possible without the growing numerical strength of the student body and the concomitant increase in lecturing staff.

Table 32 lists the poetry units and the poetry texts and poems studied in these units, as published in the *University Calendars* for the years 1910, 1930 and 1950.<sup>30</sup> Again, Williams's poetry prescriptions remained virtually unchanged from those of the previous fifteen years, and these were to remain in place until 1925. Taylor's 1930 English I poetry component comprised poets from the sixteenth to the nineteenth century, rather than poets from one historical period, in order to introduce students to the study of poetic form. Notable features of the poetry component in English III for 1930 were the introduction of the Romantics and the removal of Chaucer as a compulsory element of the course, except for those students aiming for a distinction award. By 1950, the range of poetry taught had increased significantly and included twentieth-century British and Australian poets. Table 32 does not illustrate the 'weight' given to poetry in each year's complete English program. Based on the subject prescriptions in the relevant *University Calendars*, it is clear that Williams

gave much more emphasis to drama and prose than to poetry in English I in 1910, but that poetry increased in importance in English II and III. In 1930, Taylor gave equal weight to poetry, drama and prose in English I, equal weight to poetry and prose in English II, when no drama was studied, and more weight to poetry than either prose or drama in English III.<sup>31</sup> The increased size of the English Department in 1950, including additional staff with areas of special interest and expertise, resulted in an increase in the breadth and variety of topics available for study. In English I that year, poetry equated to about one-fifth of the course, sharing time with the study of Shakespeare, modern drama, three novels, a set of short stories and linguistics. In English IIA, poetry and prose were of equal importance, and poetry was an essential element in English IIB. Two of the seven units offered in English III were devoted exclusively to poetry, and poetry was a significant element in the unit on Australian literature and the Old English and Middle English sections for the Linguistics unit. All third-year English students studied some poetry, no matter what combination of units they chose to study.

Joyce Eyre studied English at the University from 1928 to 1931, during the early years of Taylor's occupancy of the Chair of English. The English I course she studied in 1928 reflected some of the changes Taylor introduced to the course content and methods of examining the subject. Although the major literary period examined at this level remained that between 1560 and 1660, Taylor increased the number of texts to be studied and expanded the approach to their study. He continued the focus on the history of language and the study of Book I of Spenser's *The Faery Queen*, but added the 'study of Poetry as Fine Art' to the course content and Palgrave's *Golden Treasury* Bk II to the prescribed texts (*Calendar* 1928, 151). This was the first time an anthology of poetry had been included in the English I program. As shown in Table 32, Taylor had replaced this with *The English Parnassus* within two years. He continued to prescribe anthologies for English I for almost the next two decades, with the apparent intention of providing a range of poetry from different periods to illustrate his lectures on the art of poetry. Cowling's *The Outline of English Verse* was prescribed for several years during the 1940s (*Calendar* 1946, section B5).

A significant addition to the prescribed texts for English I in 1928 was Greening Lamborn's *The Rudiments of Criticism*. Its inclusion marked Taylor's intention to change the nature of the teaching of poetry. Lamborn described his approach to the study of poetry in the book's introduction. The ultimate aim of this study is 'Appreciation, which is a form of Appraising, which [...] is to learn the true value of a work of art that we may love and admire it' (7). This aim can be achieved only by training the 'critical instinct', because

like all the fine arts, [poetry] will only yield its full delight to the trained seeker, the critic – in the true meaning of that much-abused word. (8)

For Lamborn, the 'true' critic appreciates 'the true value of a work of art', not only its 'substance' (7, 3). He repudiates the 'vicious influence' (3) of the much-favoured annotated editions of poetry 'with three pages of notes to two of poetry':

Such explanations defeat all the higher aims, by dragging the mind down from the realm of the imagination into the everyday world of facts; they take the attention from the *poetic* aspect of things to direct it to the *material*. (8)

The chapters in Lamborn's book focussed on the art of poetry itself: 'What is Poetry'; 'Rhyme and Rhythm'; 'Poetry is Music'; 'Sound and Sense'; 'Stanza-Form'; 'Pictures in Poetry'; 'The Figures of Speech'; 'Other Artifices and Other Arts'; and 'Poetry is Formal Beauty'.<sup>32</sup> This approach concurred with the *Report on the Teaching of English in England*'s affirmation: 'literature, and in particular poetry, is the finest of the fine arts, and its principles and methods need at least as much study as those of the others' (204). It was this focus that was apparent in Taylor's teaching at this early stage in his work at the University. The compulsory poetry question that Joyce Eyre answered in the 1928 English I examination paper demonstrated Taylor's emphasis:

Discuss briefly the poetic style of the following passages, making comparisons between them where possible. Candidates should consider the suitability of the style to the theme, and the use of *sounds* and *imagery*. [The four passages were from Spenser, Milton (2) and 'The Twa Corbies'.] (*UHE* 1928, 1)

Joyce Eyre's English II course in 1929 was almost identical to that of 1930 (Table 31) and encompassed more poetry than had been expected of students at this level under Williams. The poetry of Johnson, Goldsmith, Gray and Collins was studied as intensively as that of Dryden and Pope. Students seeking a distinction award were also expected to study Dryden's *Essay on Dramatic Poesy* and be familiar with

sections of Fowler's *Dictionary of Modern Usage*, some of which related to poetic language, such as rhythm, metaphor and simile. Most of the examination questions focussed on the themes and style of the poetry. Candidates were asked to discuss 'the fitness of style to subject matter' in 'The Rape of the Lock' and 'Elegy in a Country Churchyard' (q. 9), to compare 'the merits of Johnson and Goldsmith as verse satirists' (q. 6) and to compare the structure and diction of the poetry of Gray and Collins (q. 7) (*UHE* 1929, 2).

The course Joyce Eyre took for her English major in 1931 was identical to that of the previous year, as detailed in Tables 31 and 32.<sup>33</sup> She completed three examinations in the subject at the end of 1931: one on the poetry of Wordsworth, Coleridge, Shelley and Keats; one on Tennyson, Browning, Milton and Lamb; and one on Chaucer and 'General Features of 19<sup>th</sup> Century Literature', which included compulsory questions for those candidates aiming for a distinction award (*UHE* 1931, 1). In the first paper, candidates had to answer five of the seven questions on the four Romantic poets. While some of these questions either tested candidates' close reading of particular poems or sought comparisons of nominated poems by Keats and Milton, or the candidates' assessment of the 'relative merits' of specified poems by Wordsworth, Keats and Shelley, two questions illustrated Taylor's continuing preoccupation with the nature of poetic art:

Discuss the following statement of Wordsworth, using illustrative references to poetry and prose which you have read. Candidates may, but need not, use or allude to Coleridge's opinions on this topic.

"Between the language of prose and that of metrical composition, there neither is, nor can be any *essential* difference."

Three of the terms used by Milton in describing good poetry were "simple, sensuous, passionate" (*sensuous* meaning "appealing to the senses). Compare "Adonais" and "Lycidas" in respect of these factors. (*UHE* 1931, 2)

The second English III paper examined the poets' subjects and themes, including Milton's Puritanism, the ideas of Tennyson and Wordsworth and the religious views of Shelley and Browning. Two questions paid particular attention to the way poets approached their subject and their poetic style. One asked candidates to compare 'Milton and Shakespeare's methods of character portrayal'; the other to compare 'the poetic styles of Milton, Browning and Tennyson, as exemplified in "Paradise Lost," "Saul" and "The Coming and Passing of Arthur"' (1). The third paper contained

more general questions on the prose and poetry of the period, some of which were notable for the demands they made on candidates' ability to compare and contrast Chaucer's work with that of one or more writers such as Browning, Keats, Dickens, Thackeray and Charles Lamb. No question on Chaucer's work focussed on his language. The only question on this paper which resembled earlier questions set by Williams was the final question inviting students to '[g]ive an account of the literary work of any one of the following: Carlyle, Ruskin, Lord Macaulay, Walter Savage Landor' (*UHE* 1931, 2). This type of question was very much the exception in Taylor's examination papers, where most questions tested students' ability to respond, judge and appreciate literary works and genres.

Taylor maintained this approach to the teaching and examining of poetry throughout the 1930s and 40s. Another text he prescribed for English I students in some years was F.H. Pritchard's *Training in Literary Appreciation*, the title reflecting the author's belief that discrimination in reading requires an 'ability to weigh, to judge and to appreciate' (5), to 'cultivate the seeing eye and the hearing ear' in order 'to appreciate those subtler beauties of which the best literature is full' (6). For Pritchard,

the superior person who waxes mightily contemptuous over criticism, and dubs it a barren and futile pursuit, is mistaken. The writer must be able to execute, and the reader trained to enjoy. Both capacities are essential to the appreciation of literature'. (14)

Particular chapters in Pritchard's text, with their 'Illustrative Reading' lists and exercises for students, indicated the type of training envisaged by the author and fostered by Taylor: 'Unity and Contrast' (17-26), 'Rhythm' (27-38), 'Prose and Poetry' (93-103), 'The Forms of Verse' (104-18) and 'Harmony and Proportion' (119-32). Taylor also prepared extensive notes on poetry for the use of English I students, and these illustrated the emphasis he placed on preparing students for the study of poetry over the ensuing three years. The 'English I Notes' printed and distributed to students in 1937, for example, included explanatory notes and general comments on the prescribed poems, and more extensive notes on topics such as poetic diction, the heroic couplet, nature poetry, romanticism and pantheism.



Until 1945, the English Department staff comprised the Professor and a part-time lecturer, Cornelius McShane.<sup>34</sup> Three additional appointments were made within two years: Frank William Harwood in 1945 and Edward Stokes and Joyce Eyre in 1946. Harwood had completed a Master's degree at Melbourne University in the field of linguistics and Stokes was completing postgraduate work on the novel at the University of Sydney. Joyce Eyre was appointed to introduce Australian literature to the English curriculum and to coordinate practical drama activities within the Department. She was the most experienced educator of the three appointments, having trained at the Hobart Teachers' College, taught at Hobart High School, worked on the mainland and in New Zealand as a lecturer at a Seventh Day Adventist College and as a principal of a church school, before being appointed lecturer at the Hobart Teachers' College in 1940. Eyre completed her MA in Tasmanian history in 1940, was a foundation member of the Hobart branch of the Fellowship of Australian Writers and an enthusiastic actor and producer with the Hobart Repertory Society (Fig. 12).<sup>35</sup>

During the next four years, the English program was re-shaped to incorporate the expertise of these new appointments. An introductory course in Linguistics became an essential element in English I. A new second-year subject, English IIB, covered the history of the English Language, Anglo-Saxon and Middle English and was designed for students wishing to proceed to honours and postgraduate study. English III comprised seven units of study from which students could elect three for a single major or six for a double major. The titles of these units were Linguistics, Anglo-Saxon and Middle English, Elizabethan Tragic Drama, Poetry from Blake to Matthew Arnold, Prose Texts and Novels of the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries, the Modern Poet, and Australian Literature.

Poetry continued to hold a strong position at all levels of study. English I students undertook a general study of the techniques of poetry based on Taylor's notes, 'The Principles of Poetic Study', and a study of sixteenth-century verse using the text *English Verse and Prose* edited by Strong and Wallace. Poetry study in second year was based on volumes 2 and 3 of *English Verse* (Oxford Classics) and covered major poets of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Chaucer's poetry and examples of Middle English poetry were studied in English IIB. Apart from some early poetry



Fig. 12. Joyce Eyre, MA (Tas).  
Lecturer in English at the University of Tasmania 1946-1950.

studied by those students undertaking units of Anglo-Saxon and Middle English, English poetry was studied in two units in English III, one unit covering works by Blake, Shelley, Wordsworth, Keats, Tennyson, Browning and Arnold, the other works by Robert Bridges, Thomas Hardy, G.M. Hopkins, W.B. Yeats, John Masefield, Rupert Brooke, T.S. Eliot, W.H. Auden, C. Day Lewis and Louis MacNeice. The primary text for the latter course was *The Modern Muse: Poems of Today*, published by the English Association (1934). This text included poems by Australian poets W. Baylebridge, C. Brennan, J. le Gay Brereton, H.M. Green, Hugh McCrae, Dora Wilcox and Frank Wilmot.<sup>36</sup> There is no evidence, however, that these Australian poems were studied or examined as part of that unit.

Joyce Eyre's English III unit on Australian Literature was the most extensive study of the nation's literature offered to third-year students in any Australian university at that time.<sup>37</sup> It comprised a full year's program of weekly lectures and tutorials and concluded with a three-hour examination paper. The course surveyed the development of Australian literature, but focussed mainly on contemporary novelists, short story writers and poets.<sup>38</sup> Texts prescribed for poetry were Percival Serle's *An Australasian Anthology*, R.D. FitzGerald's *Moonlight Acre* and contemporary collections of poems by Bernard O'Dowd, Furnley Maurice, Dowell O'Reilly and Kenneth Slessor. In her survey of Australian literature, Joyce Eyre included a brief examination of the works of a number of Australian poets, including William Wentworth, Charles Harpur, Henry Kendall, Vance and Nettie Palmer, Hugh McCrae, Mary Gilmore and the balladists, but she taught and examined in more detail the poems of Bernard O'Dowd, Furnley Maurice, R.D. FitzGerald, Shaw Nielsen, Kenneth Slessor and Douglas Stewart.<sup>39</sup>

Examinations in Australian literature from 1947 until 1950 included specific questions on Furnley Maurice (1947), Bernard O'Dowd (1947, 1948), McCrae (1948), Brennan (1948) and Shaw Neilson (1947, 1948). Typical of these questions were the following:

"I have followed a natural tendency to draw imaginative significance from everyday things". How true of his own work is this statement of Furnley Maurice? Illustrate. (1947)

Describe Bernard O'Dowd's conception of the poet's function as expressed in "Poetry Militant". Comment on these ideals as expressed in his poetry. (1947)

"We have never had a major poet, but we have had one lyricist to place beside Herrick and Suckling and that's no mean achievement." Whom would you name as "the one lyricist." Justify your choice by comment and reference to his or her work. (1948)

"Bernard O'Dowd is primarily a moralist, a didactic writer, he is not fundamentally a poet at all in the sense that McCrae or Brennan are poets." Discuss this statement with illustrations from the poetry of those mentioned. (1948)

More general questions included one in 1948 asking students to demonstrate how the spirit of the age affected Australian poetry in the last two decades. Others from the 1949 paper provided students opportunities to refer to Australian poetry in their responses:

Discuss and illustrate the so-called "falling-note" in Australian literature. To what extent does our best literary work deal with the "disintegration" of various phases of life?

"Our young country has had time to develop one great tradition – the tradition of the "dinkum Aussie" – the standard of character we have set up as our national ideal." Discuss this statement with frequent reference to Australian literature and attempt an estimate of what we mean by "Dinkum Aussie".<sup>40</sup>

This course on Australian literature ceased at the end of 1950 due to Joyce Eyre's untimely death in October of that year.<sup>41</sup> It was not resumed at a similar, or greater, depth, until 1968, when Laurie Hergenhan instituted an Honours unit on the Australian novel.

When I enrolled in English I in 1954, the structure of the English courses remained the same as for the previous nine years. Apart from the study of general principles of literary genres in first year, the literature courses continued to be structured along historical lines. Poetry featured strongly in all courses, but some of its assessment differed from previous practice. There were only two poetry questions in the second English I paper in 1954 and both reflected Taylor's focus on the function and value of poetry:

Critically discuss the following statements, suggest reasons why they have been made, and give reasons why you agree or disagree.

- (a) The poet's function is to create beauty.
- (b) The function of poetry is to teach and delight.
- (c) The function of poetry is to give pleasure.
- (d) The nature and function of poetry cannot be defined.

Refer to some poems and/or plays which (a) present conventional values and would normally evoke conventional responses, and (b) present and evoke unconventional values and responses. Discuss the potential beneficial and harmful effects on readers of both types. Candidates may, if they wish, use isolated passages from poems and / or plays. (*UHE* 1954, 1)

The English II paper on sixteenth-century literature offered six questions of which candidates had to answer four. Only one was devoted solely to poetry, while another combined a discussion of 'love' in the poetry of the period and in two of Shakespeare's comedies. For some years Taylor had adopted the practice of seeking responses to ideas across literary genres, perhaps foreshadowing a subsequent thematic approach to the study of literature. The poetry question again focussed on poetry as art:

Discuss – "Spenser seems to delight in his art for his own skill's sake ... it is all like the working of an exquisite loom which strongly and unweariedly yields fine webs for exhibition, and defiance of all spinners." (*UHE* 1954, 1)

Part A of the English II paper on seventeenth-century literature examined the poetry of Ben Jonson, Robert Herrick, Thomas Carew, John Donne, George Herbert, Thomas Vaughan, Richard Crashaw, Andrew Marvell and John Milton. Here the questions ranged from those requiring thematic and stylistic analysis to those seeking assessments of a poet's qualities. Typical of the latter of these was the first question on the examination paper:

What qualities in the work of either Jonson or Herrick raise it above the trivial or the conventional?

OR

Comment on the view that Carew is the only cavalier poet worth representing in an anthology by more than two lyrics. (*UHE* 1954, 1) <sup>42</sup>

The English III papers on nineteenth-century and modern poetry contained questions on each of Keats, Tennyson, Robert Browning, Eliot, Byron, Arnold, Gabriel Rossetti, Coleridge, Wordsworth, Hardy, Housman, Davies, de la Mare, Sassoon, Edith Sitwell, Hopkins, Pound, Auden, Day Lewis, Spender, MacNeice and Yeats. Some questions examined work studied over two years, such as that comparing Pope, Burns and Byron as satirists. All but one of the questions on nineteenth-century poetry expected candidates to compare the works of at least two poets from various

viewpoints. Conversely, all but two of those on modern poetry focussed entirely on the work of single poets. This syllabus was extensive, and students would have only studied the works of some of these poets in the detail necessary to do justice to some of the examination questions:

Discuss one of the following criticisms:

“Hardy reminds one of the village atheist brooding prosily and ponderously over the village idiot.”

OR

“Housman’s poetry is monotonous both because of its morbid self-pity and its narrow limitations of metre and language.” (*UHE* 1954, 1)

Taylor expected his students to ‘assess the importance of Edith Sitwell’s poetry’ (question 4) express opinions about the importance of ‘Hopkins’s poems of spiritual autobiography [...] in a general estimate of his work’ (part B, question 2), criticise a claim about Pound’s worth as a poet (part B, question 5) or ‘Write a critical evaluation of the poetry of Day Lewis or Spender or MacNeice, commenting on the poet’s major themes and techniques and briefly outlining his development’ (part C, question 4). The nature and range of the questions on this examination paper and others contrasted markedly with those set by Williams in the first decades of the century.<sup>43</sup> Within the compass of any English course offered at the University from 1926 until 1950, poetry extending from Chaucer to contemporary writers, was tested more comprehensively and rigorously. Students’ powers of critical judgement and evaluation, rather than their knowledge of literary history and biography, were qualities that Taylor fostered and assessed, using critical texts, such as those by Richards, Lamborn and Pritchard, to promote his cause.

Both Lamborn (3) and Pritchard (170) refer to Longinus’s sense of the sublime when discussing the appreciation of literature, particularly in the context of discussions about readers’ aesthetic responses to imaginative writing. No such responses were sought or evident from the English studies that Williams introduced during the early life of the University. By contrast, Taylor sought to enhance students’ knowledge of poetry as art and to develop their powers of appreciation. This approach accorded with that of the *Report on the Teaching of English in England* which described ‘literature, and in particular poetry, [as] the finest of the fine arts’ and affirmed ‘that its principles and methods’ needed as much study as any other subject (204). The Report warned against ‘a tendency in some quarters to treat Literature as a branch of

History or Sociology' for this was to ignore 'its nobler, more eternal and universal element' (205).

Taylor's vigorous efforts to foster critical analysis and evaluation in order to enhance the appreciation of poetry could suggest that he at times gave undue emphasis to the means rather than the end. Hayward noted this danger in 1922:

We have never realized the significance and function of appreciation; we have confused it with technique, and through this confusion we have destroyed appreciation. (186)

Taylor, however, was clear about the purpose of his teaching and the aims of teaching literature in general and poetry in particular. These aims underlay his responses to the Leaving and Matriculation exam papers he had marked for over thirty years, and were reflected in the changes he introduced to the courses of study and examining methods at the University throughout this period. He defined 'good' literature as that

meant to communicate experience, to give pleasure rather than information, and above all to awaken in the reader feelings analogous to those which inspired the writer. It should illuminate its subject: literature is more real than life in that it brings cause and result together and indicates the unity underlying them; in life they are often separated by twenty years of meaningless time. ('Critics and Criticism' 3)

In his commitment to literature as a subject and his methods of teaching, Taylor was a product of his Oxford training under Walter Raleigh. That professor, too, had developed his school of English Studies based on the value of literature as a study in its own right, and had demonstrated that 'literary study is itself a demanding and complex subject' with its own 'academic rigour' (Palmer 150).

Within this context, Taylor believed in the 'need for impartial, rational analysis of poetry, free from the raptures, heart-flutterings and quiverings of the spinal column which make most literary criticism so futile and unprogressive' ('The Higher Criticism' 3). Taylor was the speaker at the inaugural meeting of the University-sponsored English Association on 24 July 1934, when he addressed the topic: 'The function of criticism and the position of critics'. Taylor described the critic as 'an interpreter, or a jeweller polishing diamonds' who 'did not create, but revealed excellence which would escape the average reader'. He identified two forms of

criticism, the 'Romantic' and the 'Judicial', the first 'heightening the colours and deepening the shadows' of the work under consideration 'to rouse in the reader the same creative glow of imagination which stimulated the poet'; the second teaching discrimination, distinguishing 'depth of thought from mere turbulence' and identifying 'lapses from inspiration'. Together, these two approaches made for good criticism that focussed on 'the author's intention, its value' and the degree to which it is achieved. Taylor concluded:

Finally, sound criticism demands an analytical mind. In criticism, the striving is greater than the result – its great advantage is the sharpening of the mental faculties and the improvement of taste. ('Critics and Criticism' 3)

The belief that the reading and study of poetry was associated with improving students' 'faculties' and 'taste' has pervaded many of the beliefs and practices examined in this study. Matthew Arnold claimed that the 'formative power' of poetry extended beyond 'sharpening' only the 'mental faculties', to fostering the 'inward world of man's moral and spiritual nature' ('Highest Powers of Poetry' 65). Joseph Lancaster, Henry Dunn and men of their generation regarded poetry as a means of propagating the Christian faith, and Dunn associated 'taste' with cultivating moral qualities of kindness, goodness and appreciation of beauty. Taylor, however, was wary of such claims, believing that the study of poetry was primarily an intellectual pursuit fostering skills of analysis and discrimination. Over the years encompassed by this study, this concept of 'taste' changed to one of valuing excellence in the execution of art irrespective of its message.



# Tables

31

Content of English courses at the University of Tasmania, 1910, 1920, 1930.

LEVEL	1910	1930	1950
English I	<b>History of Language.</b> <b>Period of Literature, 1560 to 1660.</b> Emerson: <i>History of the English Language</i> (Macmillan). Saintsbury: <i>History of Elizabethan Literature</i> , (Macmillan).	<b>History and structure of the English Language.</b> <b>Study of literary craftsmanship and the development of English Literature.</b> <b>History and structure of English Drama up to Shakespeare.</b> Henry Bradley: <i>The Making of English</i> , (Macmillan). Pritchard: <i>Training in Literary Appreciation</i> , (Harrap). Lamborn and Harrison: <i>Shakespeare – The Man and His Stage</i> , (Clarendon Press).	<b>Linguistic Study.</b> <b>General study of techniques of composition, prose, poetry, drama, novel and short story.</b> <b>Sixteenth century verse and prose.</b> Jespersen: <i>Growth and Structure of the English Language</i> , (Blackwell). Either Palmer: <i>Introduction to Modern Linguistics</i> (Macmillan) or Bloomfield: <i>Language</i> , (Allen and Unwin). “The Principles of Poetic Study” [Typed notes]
English II	<b>Period of Literature, 1660 to 1780.</b> Gosse: <i>History of Eighteenth Century Literature</i> .	<b>Period of Literature, 1660 to 1780, with prescribed texts.</b> Strong: <i>Short History of English Literature</i> , pp. 171-277, (Clarendon Press). <i>Additional for Distinction:</i> Fowler: <i>Dictionary of Modern Usage</i> . <i>Exempted Students:</i> Leslie Stephen: <i>English Literature and Society in the 18<sup>th</sup> Century</i> , (Duckworth & Co.) Saintsbury: <i>The English Novel</i> (Dent). The Lives of Dryden, Pope, and Swift. ( <i>English Men of Letters Series</i> , Macmillan).	English IIA: <b>Prose and verse of the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries.</b> <b>Comic Drama.</b> <b>Literary Criticism.</b> Richards: <i>The Principles of Literary Criticism</i> , (Kegan Paul). English IIB: <b>History of the English Language.</b> <b>Anglo-Saxon and Middle English.</b> Wyld: <i>Short History of English</i> , (Murray). Wright: <i>Old English Grammar and Reader</i> , (Heath). Cook: <i>A Literary Middle English Reader</i> , (Ginn and Co.).

LEVEL	1910	1930	1950
English III	<b>Period of Literature, 1340 to 1580, with prescribed books.</b> <i>Primer of Chaucer</i> , (Macmillan).	<b>Period of Literature, 1780-1860.</b> Strong: <i>Short History of English Literature</i> , pp 277-end, (Clarendon Press). <i>Exempted Students:</i> Saintsbury: <i>The English Novel</i> , (Dent) Sir Walter Raleigh: <i>Wordsworth</i> (Arnold). Legouis: <i>Chaucer</i> , (Dent). Ker: <i>English Literature, Medieval</i> , (Home University Library). Garrod: <i>Keats</i> , (Clarendon Press). Lives of Shelley, Tennyson and Browning, ( <i>English Men of Letters Series</i> , Macmillan).	English IIIA, B, C. <b>1. Linguistics. 2. Anglo-Saxon and Middle English. 3. Elizabethan Tragic Drama. 4. Poetry from Blake to M. Arnold. 5. Prose texts and Novels of 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> Centuries. 6. The Modern Poet. 7. Australian Literature.</b> Ogden and Richards: <i>The Meaning of Meaning</i> . Jespersen: <i>Essentials of English Grammar</i> , and <i>Philosophy of Grammar</i> . Ogden: <i>Opposition</i> . Gardiner: <i>Speech and Language</i> . Bloomfield: <i>Language</i> . Onions: <i>Shakespeares Glossary</i> , (O.U.P.) Houghton: <i>Life and Letters of Keats</i> , (Everyman). Gilkes: <i>A Key to Modern Poetry</i> (Blackie). Ward: <i>Twentieth Century Poetry</i> , (Methuen). H.M. Green: <i>An Outline of Australian Literature</i> . Morris Miller: <i>Australian Literature</i> (2 Vols.).

The major literary periods and topics for study are **highlighted**.

## Poetry content of English courses at the University of Tasmania, 1910, 1930, 1950

LEVEL	1910	1930	1950
English I	Additional for Credit: Spenser: <i>The Faery Queene</i> , Book I.	<i>The English Parnassus</i> : Selections from the poetry of Spenser, Milton, Pope, Johnson, Goldsmith, Gray, Wordsworth, Coleridge, Shelley, Keats, Tennyson. For Distinction: Dryden's 'Absolom and Achitophel'.	<i>English Verse and Prose</i> . ed. Strong and Wallace. Selected passages to be studied as illustrations of poetic technique. Poems from pages 66-134 by Spenser, Sidney, Lyly, Greville, Peele, Greene, Lodge, Marlowe, Nashe, Raleigh, Daniel, Drayton, Davies, Fletcher, Shakespeare.
English II	Dryden: 'The Hind and the Panther'. Pope: 'Essay on Man'. Swift: Later poems.	Dryden: 'Absolom and Achitophel'. Pope: 'The Rape of the Lock'. Pope's Satires and Epistles. Johnson: 'Vanity of Human Wishes'. Goldsmith: 'The Traveller'; 'The Deserted Village'. Selections from the poetry of Gray and Collins.	English IIA <i>English Verse</i> Vol. II (World Classics): Poems of Campion, Donne, Jonson, Herrick, Herbert, Carew, Suckling, Lovelace, Vaughan, Milton and selected ballads. <i>English Verse</i> Vol. III (World Classics). Pope's poetry. Additional for Grade I or II Pass: Donne's Songs and Sonnets, Elegy XII and Satire III. English IIB Chaucer's poetry.
English III	Chaucer: <i>The Canterbury Tales</i> : 'The Prologue'; 'The Knightes Tale'. Additional for Credit: Langland: <i>Piers the Ploughman</i> . Selections from Skelton.	Selections from the poetry of Wordsworth, Milton, Charles Lamb, Coleridge, Shelley, Keats, Tennyson: and Browning. Additional for Distinction: Chaucer: <i>Canterbury Tales</i> : 'The Prologue' and 'The Knight's Tale'.	Anglo-Saxon poetry. 'Havelok the Dane'. Fourteenth century verse. Poetry of Blake, Shelley, Wordsworth, Keats, Tennyson, Browning, Arnold. Poetry of Bridges, Hardy, Hopkins, Yeats, Masfield, R. Brooke, T.S. Eliot, Auden, Day Lewis, MacNeice. Selections from Serle's <i>Australian Anthology of Verse</i> . Special study of Bernard O'Dowd, Furnley Maurice, R.D. Fitzgerald, Kenneth Slessor and D. O'Reilly. Additional for Grades I and II Passes: Milton's 'Samson Agonistes'. Poetry of William Morris and T.S. Eliot.

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## Notes

<sup>1</sup> *Educational Record* (September 1912): 53. Further references to this journal are abbreviated *ER* and appear in the text, in parenthesis.

<sup>2</sup> Two hundred and seventy-one students enrolled at the two high schools in 1913: 38 in the teaching course, 64 in the secondary course, 135 in the commercial course, 32 in the industrial course, and 2 in the domestic course (Johnston 40).

<sup>3</sup> Phillips provides further information on the high school courses and certification: 207, Appendix 12.

<sup>4</sup> See, for example, the extracts from Inspector Fletcher's 1923 'Annual Report on State High Schools' (*ER* [May 1924]: 66-7).

<sup>5</sup> Successful applicants for high school teaching positions were required to have a university degree, or at least 'four subjects for the degree of Arts or Science'. Teachers who had not completed their degree were 'expected to do so within three years of appointment' (*ER* [September 1912]: 53).

<sup>6</sup> The Training College introduced a special course for high school teachers in 1917, but trainees devoted most of their time to completing degree subjects (Johnston 71).

<sup>7</sup> The University's Board of Studies appointed the Board of Public Examinations that comprised all the professorial staff and some members of the teaching staff. There were 16 members of the Board in 1914, of whom 10 were University staff (*University Calendar* 1914-15, 97). The Education Department challenged this degree of external control of secondary syllabuses and examination during the 1920s and 1930s, but with little success. See Phillips 186-204.

<sup>8</sup> Page 131 of the University's *Junior Public Examination Handbook*, 1904-1905. Unless specified otherwise, all page references below are from these Handbooks for the designated years.

<sup>9</sup> The *University Calendar* provided no details of publishers and dates of publication for these texts.

<sup>10</sup> The three questions on Scott's *The Lady of the Lake* in the Intermediate examination the previous year did test candidates' knowledge of the content of the poem, but asked for no personal response. One of the questions was very much in the traditional style: 'Under what circumstances was each of the following passages used? Write brief notes on the italicised words and phrases [...]' (1).

<sup>11</sup> The Senior Public Examination became the Leaving Certificate Examination from 1922.

<sup>12</sup> In each of these cases a text containing a selection of the poet's works was prescribed. Major poems of each poet that were examined included Macaulay's *Lays of Ancient Rome*, Tennyson's 'The Lotus Eaters', 'Ulysses', 'Morte D'Arthur', 'The Lady of Shalott' and 'Ode on the Death of the Duke of Wellington', Milton's 'L'Allegro', 'Il Penseroso', 'Lycidas' and Book III of *Paradise Lost*, and Arnold's 'Sohrab and Rustum', 'Balder Dead', 'The Church of Brou', 'The Scholar-Gipsy', 'The Forsaken Merman', 'Memorial Verses' and 'Quiet Work'.

<sup>13</sup> It is difficult to be precise about the titles and editors of these anthologies. Their listings in the annual *University Calendars* were abbreviated and inexact. Anthologies or collections prescribed in other years, as printed in the *Calendars*, were: *The Wordsworth Epoch* edited by Stobart (1909), *Ballads and Rhymes Illustrating English History* edited by F. Sidgwick (1911), *Poems of English Country Life* edited by George and Hadow (1912), *English Patriotic Poetry* edited by L. Godwin Salt (1913), *Lyra Historica* edited by Windsor and Turrall (1914), *Poems of Action* edited by V.H. Collins (1915), *Pure Gold* edited by H.C. O'Neill (1919) and *A Book of Victorian Poetry and Prose* edited by Mrs Hugh Walker (1923).

<sup>14</sup> *Manual of the Senior Public Examinations 1917* (1). Further references to these publications are abbreviated *SPE* and appear in the text, in parenthesis.

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<sup>15</sup> *Public Examinations: Examination Papers and Reports 1927*. 20. Quotations from examination papers and examiners' reports between this year and 1945 are drawn for this publication for the relevant years. References to these are abbreviated *PE* and appear in the text, in parenthesis.

<sup>16</sup> The dual certification resulted from disagreements between the Association of Public Schools and the Education Department about the control of these examinations. See Phillips 195-9.

<sup>17</sup> The preface to the 1946 *Schools Board Manual* provides further information about the Board and its responsibilities.

<sup>18</sup> Taylor donated his copy of *Some Aspects of Modern Poetry* to the Morris Miller Library, University of Tasmania. His annotations in the chapters on 'Poetry, Old and New' (44-54), 'Some Aspects of Modern Poetry' (118-32) and 'Some Characteristics of Modern Literature' (265-87) indicate his interest in criteria separating 'good' poetry from 'bad'.

<sup>19</sup> The Leaving Certificate was renamed 'Matriculation' in 1946.

<sup>20</sup> *Matriculation Manual 1950* (1). Further references to this publication are abbreviated *MM* and appear in the text, in parenthesis.

<sup>21</sup> These developments are discussed in the concluding chapter of this thesis.

<sup>22</sup> In this same report, Taylor wrote at length about the failings of students in composition work and of teachers of English and other subjects failing to exercise sufficiently high expectations of this work. He made brief reference, too, to a matter he had raised earlier about the compulsory passing of the essay on the paper in order to qualify for a pass in the subject.

<sup>23</sup> Henry Kingsley's *The Recollections of Geoffry Hamlyn* was included in the Intermediate study prescriptions in 1931, and Rolf Boldrewood's *Robbery Under Arms* in 1938. At the Leaving examination level, a collection of Australian essays edited by Cowling and Maurice was prescribed in 1936, G.B. Lancaster's *Pageant* in 1940, Murdoch and King's *Prose Passages* in 1942, Davidson's *Man-Shy* in 1944 and Prichard's *Haxby's Circus* in 1948.

<sup>24</sup> These quotations are from A.B. Taylor's handwritten copy of the supplementary examination paper, held in the University's Faculty of Arts files (UTA 47/79).

<sup>25</sup> *Handbook of Examinations 1910* (17). Unless stated otherwise, further quotations from University English examination papers are taken from pages of the Examination Handbooks for the years cited. The publications are abbreviated *UHE* and appear in the text, in parenthesis.

<sup>26</sup> Among such people were Amy Rowntree, A.L. Meston (a senior teacher at Launceston High School at the time Joyce Eyre was enrolled as a student, and subsequently Inspector of High Schools), W.H. Hills (Deputy Principal of the Hobart Teachers' College when Joyce Eyre was a trainee-teacher), H.V. Biggins and Olive Mahoney (subsequently Headmaster and Senior Mistress respectively at Hobart High School when I was a student at the school in the late 1940s).

<sup>27</sup> Davis states that Taylor was born in New Zealand (90). Dale's claim that he was born in Manchester, England is correct (62).

<sup>28</sup> The University of Tasmania's Human Resources Division refused direct access to Taylor's staff file, but provided information on its contents, including details about Taylor's previous university appointments and his Oxford studies, where he gained First Class Honours in English Language and Literature in 1920.

<sup>29</sup> Information in Table 31 is drawn directly from the *University Calendars* for the relevant years. The references to prescribed texts are transcribed exactly as printed in these publications.

<sup>30</sup> This information is drawn directly from the *University Calendars* for the relevant years. The references to prescribed texts are transcribed exactly as printed in these publications.

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<sup>31</sup> In the early 1930s, Taylor was in the process of changing all the English courses and this 'weighting' changed eventually. Drama featured more prominently in English II and III levels later in the decade.

<sup>32</sup> The remaining two chapters outlined a series of exercises for children and provided an example of a lesson on Tennyson's 'Brook'. The text was designed primarily for teachers and would have proved valuable for Taylor's students, many of whom were studying at the University while pursuing teaching careers.

<sup>33</sup> The statement on page ix of the *University Calendar 1931* that the period of literature to be studied for English III was 1660–1780 is wrong. It should have been printed as 1780–1860.

<sup>34</sup> McShane had been appointed to this position in 1935. He had graduated in Arts from the University in 1934 and gained his MA in 1942.

<sup>35</sup> See my unpublished paper 'The Life and Work of Joyce Eyre Phillips'.

<sup>36</sup> This anthology included 43 poems by 27 American poets, 11 poems by 8 South African poets, 17 poems by 11 Canadian poets, 7 poems by 6 New Zealand poets, 4 poems by 2 Indian poets and 9 by the 7 Australian poets as listed.

<sup>37</sup> I base this claim on information drawn from contemporary *Calendars* of the Universities of Adelaide, Melbourne and Sydney, and books and articles by Leigh Dale (1997), W. Milgate (1954), Geoffrey Serle (1951), Morris Miller (1954), Elizabeth Webby (1982), John Docker (1979) and David Carter (1980).

<sup>38</sup> Apart from the prescribed poets, texts included Vance Palmer's *The Passage*, Katherine Prichard's *Haxby's Circus* and *Coonardoo*, Kylie Tennant's *The Battlers*, Leonard Mann's *The Go-Getters*, Eve Langley's *The Pea Pickers*, Xavier Herbert's *Capricornia*, Eleanor Dark's *The Timeless Land*, Barnard Eldershaw's *Tomorrow and Tomorrow* and Richardson's *The Fortunes of Richard Mahony*. Short Story texts were A.A. Phillips's *An Australian Muster* and *Twenty Great Australian Short Stories* (Dolphin). Recommended texts for reference included H.M. Green's *An Outline of Australian Literature*, Morris Miller's *Bibliography*, the *Coast to Coast* anthologies and the journals *Meanjin* and *Southerly*.

<sup>39</sup> Joyce Eyre's 1949 lectures on Australian literature also included references to the poetry of Enid Moodie-Heddle, 'Brian Vrepon', Peter Hopegood, Flexmore Hudson, the Jindyworobaks and Norma Davis. I am indebted to Beth McLeod for allowing me access to her notes of Joyce Eyre's 1949 lectures.

<sup>40</sup> These examinations questions are drawn from the University's unpaginated *Handbook of Examinations* for the relevant years.

<sup>41</sup> During 1949 and 1950, Joyce Eyre supervised a postgraduate student's research on Australian literature. James Horner was awarded the degree of Master of Arts 1953 for his thesis 'The Modern Australian Novel: a study of theme, characterisation and background'. This was the first research degree on Australian literature to be awarded by the University of Tasmania.

<sup>42</sup> This particular form of question (the 'anthology' question) was used frequently in Matriculation and Higher School Certificate literature examinations during the next decades.

<sup>43</sup> It is true, of course, that some of the questions relating to Anglo-Saxon and Middle English studies in the 1940s paralleled those set by Williams almost fifty years earlier, the nature and the demands of the subjects remaining constant. But even in these areas of constancy, Taylor's influence was marked. Students were to exercise judgement and prove their point of view, as shown in questions such as these from the 1947 English IIB and IIIB examination paper:

In what respects are the stories of Malory and Chaucer superior to the others as literary art.  
In what respects is *Piers Plowman* artistically superior to *Havelok the Dane* and *The Owl and*

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Developments in Tasmanian education during the 1950s and 60s signified changes to the status and function of poetry and the nature of English teaching in general. A new syllabus for primary school English challenged the traditional canon of poetry taught and the role of poetry in learning programs. Increasing student enrolments in senior secondary classes prompted a review of the structure of the existing Matriculation English Literature course and proposals for new syllabuses that would affect the status poetry had enjoyed at this level since early in the century. New leaders in the University's Department of English and Faculty of Education generated professional discussion about the teaching of poetry and the changing focus of English teaching. The Education Department appointed senior officers to promote and co-ordinate speech education and English teaching practices across the State, and the foundation of the Tasmanian Association for the Teaching of English in 1966 provided opportunities for teachers to exchange ideas about their own teaching practices and learn of developments in other states and overseas.<sup>1</sup>

Proposed changes to traditional precepts and practices of poetry teaching created tensions between classroom aims and methods that had originated from, and been consolidated by, measures of bureaucratic control, and new approaches to teaching that were influenced by Romantic ideologies. Studies by Ian Hunter and Ian Reid are useful in considering these tensions. The methods employed in elementary education in Van Diemen's Land in the nineteenth century were based on the need to enforce what Hunter describes as a 'morally managed environment' (70). Poetry was an instrument of 'moral training', and 'supervisory techniques' such as school inspections, testing procedures and prescribed methods of teaching, regulated this training (112, 121). These techniques formed a 'special pedagogical technology' of control that permeated government education throughout the time-span of this study (36). On the other hand, Reid examines how 'distinctively Romantic' concerns 'acquired institutional shape' in the nineteenth century ('Romantic Ideologies' 24). He demonstrates that 'Wordsworth's dual emphasis on creative imagination and moral instruction was pervasive throughout the Victorian era, and remained so long afterwards in many English classrooms', culminating in the 'gospel of growth' of the 1960s ('Wordsworth institutionalized' 21, 33). And it is clear that the discourse of those Tasmanian courses of study and syllabuses published from the first decade of

the twentieth century were conditioned, at least in part, by these Romantic ideologies.

There was a significant mismatch, however, between the rhetoric of the syllabuses and actual classroom teaching practices for much of this period. Processes of bureaucratic control were ritualised to such an extent that the implementation of changes based on the needs of individuals and their personal development, rather than on those of a system or institution, was a difficult process that created tensions among teachers and across institutions. Traditional teaching practices, such as the poetry appreciation lesson, the memorisation of poems and the testing of students' critical appreciation of poetry, began to be challenged in the 1950s, as the implications of the discourse of Romantic ideologies for teaching and learning were articulated in classroom practice. In primary schools in particular, the concepts of cultivation and growth were realised in actual teaching and learning activities, rather than functioning only as descriptors of educational precepts.

### **Poetry in the primary schools**

The 1950 *English curriculum for the Primary Schools* marked the decline of the century-old imposition of a selective canon of poets and poems to be studied in primary schools. The single school reader prescribed for each grade was replaced by 'approved series of readers suited to the range of ability within the grade', some of which contained no poetry.<sup>2</sup> Teachers taught poetry from a 'book of poems' of their own choosing (14). Early in the 1960s, a new *English Curriculum* included references to the teaching of poetry under the headings 'Reading for Appreciation' and 'Poetry Speaking'. This curriculum, however, devoted more attention to 'Basic Reading', 'Reading for Information', 'Reading for Recreation', and 'Remedial Reading' than to 'Reading for Appreciation'.<sup>3</sup> It favoured a 'scientific' approach to the acquisition of basic and developing reading skills, expecting teachers to determine children's reading ages using one of several diagnostic and standardized reading tests, and then to organise their classes into 'ability groups' and provide these groups with appropriate reading materials (15). An extensive section on 'Poetry Speaking' for each grade in this *Curriculum* affirmed that individual and group speaking of poetry was 'an aid to the enjoyment of literature and [...] a means of developing the children's power of expression' (63). This section included

suggestions for class activities and provided examples of poems arranged for group speaking. By comparison, the section on 'Reading for Appreciation' was brief. Teachers were to stimulate children's imaginations and broaden their experience in order to 'set the foundation for progressive development in literary appreciation'. In a discourse similar to that used in former syllabuses, schools were advised to teach only works 'of high literary merit' and assist children to appreciate their content and 'beauty of style', in order to create 'an appetite' for similar material (18-19).

The arrangement and relative content of the different components of English presented in this *English Curriculum* suggested that the status of poetry as literature was diminishing. The traditional literary appreciation lesson appeared to be declining in favour of graded reading schemes, programmed instruction, learning activities based on themes or topics, and the growing popularity of verse-speaking. The appointment of the English poet and speech educator, Clive Sansom, as the Department's Supervisor of Speech Education in 1950, heralded new approaches to spoken English activities that were welcomed by teachers across the State. The materials and lesson exemplars on poetry speaking that he distributed to teachers on his regular visits to classrooms were regarded by many as an attractive alternative to traditional poetry lessons.<sup>4</sup>

The *Curriculum* referred teachers to two articles published in *Tasmanian Education* for more detailed recommendations about texts and approaches to teaching literature in the primary schools. Titled 'The Foundations of Literary Appreciation in the Primary School', the articles were written by William H. Perkins, Senior Lecturer in English Methodology in the University's Faculty of Education and a member of the State Primary Schools Co-ordinating Committee for English.<sup>5</sup> Perkins's comments and suggestions about the teaching of literature supported many of the new approaches to the subject, but did so within a framework of traditional precepts and practice that were based on his own training and experience as a classroom teacher.

While welcoming many of the new approaches to reading, Perkins warned that they 'could easily drive true appreciation and love of literature out the window':<sup>6</sup>

With the greatly increased emphasis on reading techniques, measurements and statistics, there is a danger (and some evidence) of literature being either

neglected or being “cabined, cribbed, confined” by controlled vocabularies, scanning, span and speed and similar mental gymnastics – not to mention tachitoscopes, teaching machines and other monstrous manifestations of modern automation! (1, 16)

Similarly, in the field of poetry, Perkins warned teachers to ‘distinguish between poetry for appreciation and poetry for verse-speaking’, believing that the emphasis on the latter activity had reduced the time spent ‘on the appreciation of true poetry in some primary schools’:

The combined “brainwashing” effects of comprehension reading and verse-speaking tend to banish literary appreciation of both prose and poetry from the minds of some teachers. (2, 85)

Perkins extended the *English Curriculum*’s brief statement on the teaching of literature by reminding teachers that they should aim to develop children’s ‘natural delight’ in stories, verse and drama, stimulate their imaginations, ‘enlarge their experience [...], develop them emotionally and spiritually’, and ‘lay the foundations of literary appreciation, discrimination and standards of taste’ (1, 19). While many of these ideas were couched in the language of earlier primary school courses of instruction, Perkins’s references to ‘discrimination’ and ‘standards’ were new, and indicated his familiarity with approaches recommended by Denys Thompson and his colleagues in *The Use of English*.<sup>7</sup> One writer from whom Perkins quoted frequently to support his points of view, however, was Percival Chubb whose text on the teaching of English he had studied as a teacher-trainee in the late 1920s under the direction of J.A. Johnson.<sup>8</sup>

Perkins was firm about the quality and nature of the poetry that teachers should select for use in class. They should remember their responsibility to share ‘the cultural heritage of mankind’ (1, 21), and choose poems ‘of the highest possible standards’ that deal with familiar experiences, but also those which would ‘open up new vistas in [children’s] imagination’ (2, 85). Poems should be wide-ranging in scope and include works from a range of countries, including the United States and countries of the Commonwealth such as New Zealand, Canada and South Africa. The poems should represent a variety of styles, including nursery rhymes, sea shanties, folk-songs, carols, lyrics, narrative poems and humorous verse, and sometimes be chosen to correlate with other subjects, and for group or class verse

speaking. The poems should be 'natural and unpretentious and portray sincere feeling in a straightforward manner'; and teachers should distinguish between 'genuine poems written for children and whimsical "Barriesque", sentimental poems written for adults **about** children' (2, 86). Particular attention was to be given to Australian verse where 'greater emphasis is needed, particularly in Tasmania, the most colonial of the Australian States and one where, in certain aspects of our cultural life the English influence is most overpowering' (2, 86).

To assist teachers in selecting appropriate poems, Perkins recommended twenty-six anthologies, published either in Britain, America or Australia, and a range of poets he considered suitable for primary school children. Among these were James Reeves, Irene Gough, Eleanor Farjeon, Edward Lear, Lewis Carroll, Rodney Bennett, E.V. Rieu, and James Stephens, and Australian poets such as A.B. Paterson, Dorothea Mackellar, Henry Kendall, Rex Ingamells and Mary Hannay Foot. He also recommended some poets whose work had been included in the *Tasmanian Readers*, such as John Masefield, Walter de la Mare, A.A. Milne, Christina Rossetti and Rudyard Kipling, but made no mention of the once-popular Longfellow, Tennyson and Adam Lindsay Gordon (2, 87-8). Perkins's recommended list of poetry anthologies and poets provided a guide for teachers in selecting their poetry for class reading and appreciation. They were no longer constrained by prescribed canons of poems that had operated since 1841.

Teachers were left in no doubt, however, about the personal qualities they themselves had to possess in order to succeed as teachers of poetry. They had to 'appreciate the greatest poetry', be able to 'discriminate' between first-rate and second-rate poetry, be familiar with 'a large number of the best poems', and 'keep up-to date with the dozens of worthwhile new poems being written for children every year' (2, 85). This was a dramatic change in the teacher's role from that of earlier decades. Previously, teachers were instructed what to teach and how to teach it. Now, teachers were the arbiters of the content of poetry lessons, and, to a considerable extent, were able to decide on the methods of presenting poems to their classes. The Department's prescribed canon of poems for primary schools and procedures for monitoring its teaching ceased in the 1960s.

Changes in the focus and management of primary school learning, as indicated by various recommendations in the 1963 *Curriculum*, led to the gradual decline of the traditional poetry appreciation lesson in which the teacher, following procedures set by school inspectors decades earlier, inspired children to respond positively to the themes and artistry of one or two set poems. Perkins described this practice as 'stretch[ing]' a poem 'out on the rack of a thirty minute lesson'. At the same time, though, he acknowledged that the 'formal study and repetition' of some poems was necessary (2, 89). And despite the emphasis on more flexible approaches to the teaching of poetry, the traditional poetry appreciation lesson retained its status for the next decade. School inspectors endorsed the practice, and Perkins promoted its value to his student teachers with an enthusiasm akin to the missionary zeal with which Neale had promoted the teaching of poetry in the first decade of the century. Student teachers learnt that to conduct poetry appreciation lessons with the vigour and flamboyance Perkins practised in his own demonstration lessons was to ensure success.<sup>9</sup> Such lessons, undoubtedly, were capable of inspiring students' enjoyment and appreciation of poetry. The problem was that this approach sometimes degenerated into a ritual reminiscent of the 1930s and 40s when methods of lesson presentation sometimes triumphed over lesson content. The poetry appreciation lesson was a formulaic presentation which, in certain situations, contained within its equation a suggestion that the poetry lesson was a quasi-spiritual experience in which the teacher revealed the poem's mystery with 'teachery flourishes and fanfares' (Sussams 139).

O.P. Sharma caricatured several such approaches to the teaching of poetry in his article 'The Death of Poetry (or almost so)', published in the Department's *Tasmanian Journal of Education* in the late 1960s. He identified 'three types of teacher of verse whom one generally has the misfortune of meeting as a pupil': one teacher who 'would leave his audience in the lurch and take off on a solo flight to Parnassus [from whose] vastness of empty space his voice would come, faint and feeble, like that of a bad radio broadcast caught in a worse storm'; another teacher 'bursting with energy and clamouring for attention from the world at large' who would 'make an unconscious parody of the wretched poem' and then 'seized with a holy frenzy [...] would wallow in a stream of totally unrelated emotions'; and, finally, the teacher who enforced poetry 'as a sort of discipline and, with a pedantic

flair for hair-splitting, rates accuracy above the primitive magic and rhythm of an incantation' (120).

Sharma's article ridiculed the role of teachers as performers in the ritual of the poetry appreciation lesson and implied that the reality of the classroom experience might bear little relationship to syllabus statements that children should 'enjoy' poetry and 'delight' in their experience of it. This implication was refuted by the work of local teachers such as Owen Reid and Joan Woodberry who successfully combined traditional approaches to the teaching of poetry with wide reading and practical activities designed to enrich children's experience of language and the world around them. Reid's classroom practice was based on the belief that poetry 'cultivates and nurtures the imagination' and appeals 'to listeners or readers in different ways'. He showed how a combination of approaches could 'naturalise' poetry and increase its relevance to children's lives. These approaches included verse speaking, reading and responding to poems on similar or contrasting themes, spontaneous informal oral and written response prompted by a 'nature ramble' in conjunction with the reading of relevant poems by David Campbell or Douglas Stewart, and daily informal reading of three or more poems, often chosen by the children (177, 178). Woodberry suggested a range of practical activities designed to heighten children's interest in poetry and evoke their genuine liking for and response to the art: 'Too many people have taken the literal definition of "appreciation" to mean a valuation or estimation of worth rather than an enjoyment that involves a child's deepening awareness of the life about him, in the terms of his own senses' (12). Teachers should approach the teaching of poetry 'creatively', because 'appreciation is an active, favourable response [that] is not always aroused in one who only sits and listens' (13). By the end of the 1960s, both the role of the teacher as performer and the ritual of the poetry appreciation lesson had declined. They were superseded by classroom methods based on 'language and personal growth' models of teaching that placed the child at the centre of the classroom experience, and 'self-discovery' and creativity at the heart of the education process (Watson 41). In this context, teachers selected poems to satisfy children's personal and creative needs, not necessarily those poems that would 'cultivate the soil of the virtues' or represent 'the gems of English verse'. And teachers welcomed books such as Brian Powell's *English Through Poetry Writing*

and often encouraged children to write as many 'poems' as those they read or listened to in class.

### **Matriculation English**

The canon of poets studied and the importance assigned to the examination of poetry at the matriculation level remained firmly in place until the 1970s. Some changes to the English Literature syllabus and methods of examining poetry made in the preceding two decades, however, reflected the Syllabus Committee's growing concern about students' ability to meet the required standards. The introduction of more broadly-based Higher School Certificate English syllabuses in 1971 meant that literature study no longer dominated English studies at that level.

A.B. Taylor retired from the Chair of English in 1956 and was succeeded by Murray Todd whose doctoral studies in London had focussed on the poetry of Wordsworth.<sup>10</sup> Todd had little opportunity to influence matriculation poetry teaching and examining before his sudden illness and unexpected death in December 1960. One of his most significant actions was to appoint James McAuley to the English Department as Reader in Poetry, given that McAuley succeeded him to the Chair of English and remained in the post until his death in October 1976.<sup>11</sup> During this time, McAuley was an active and influential member of the English syllabus committee of the Schools Board of Tasmania and a prominent commentator on English teaching across Australia, serving as President of the Australian Association for the Teaching of English from 1971 to 1975.<sup>12</sup>

The canon of poets studied and examined for Matriculation English Literature in the 1950s differed little from that of the previous decade, although over time additional twentieth-century poets were included. Tennyson, Keats, Browning and Milton were the poets most frequently prescribed from 1954 to 1964.<sup>13</sup> Pope, Chaucer, Thomas Hardy and G.M. Hopkins were each prescribed three times during this period, but Arnold, Shelley and Wordsworth appeared less frequently than in the 1940s. T.S. Eliot, Thomas Hardy, Wilfred Owen, Algernon Swinburne, Edith Sitwell, Ezra Pound, Stephen Spender, G.K. Chesterton and Francis Thompson were each included in at least one year's syllabus in the late 1950s. This group was expanded in the



1960s to include W.H. Auden, W.B. Yeats, Robert Bridges, Robert Graves, Roy Campbell, Dylan Thomas, A.E. Housman, Robert Frost and Wilfred Owen.

Two significant changes to the canon in the 1960s were the naming each year of one poet whose works were to be studied in depth and the introduction of Australian poetry. Poets listed for close study during this period included Browning, Tennyson, Coleridge, Byron and Pope. Australian poetry first featured in the syllabus in 1964 when single poems by Henry Lawson ('Middleton's Rouseabout'), Shaw Neilson ('The Sundowner'), Rosemary Dobson ('Country Press') and Judith Wright ('The Builders') were prescribed. From that point on, at least one Australian poet featured in each year's syllabus, Douglas Stewart, Kenneth Slessor and Judith Wright being among the first to be prescribed.

Three changes which impacted on the teaching and examining of matriculation poetry were the decisions by the Syllabus Committee to abandon English Expression as a matriculation subject in 1958, to include a fact test on the Literature texts from that year, and to introduce two levels of study and examination for English Literature from 1962. The second and third of these changes arose from growing concerns about candidates' inadequate knowledge of the texts, and the increasing numbers of students who found it difficult to respond adequately to examination questions considered appropriate at this level.

The preface to the examination requirements for the Literature syllabus was changed in the late 1950s to read:

Questions will be set to test knowledge of the texts, ability to understand and appreciate them, and to relate them to a background of literary history. (1958)

The fact tests were introduced in 1958 and usually contained thirty or more questions requiring short answers on a range of subjects relevant to the texts studied. Typical of the questions relating to poetry were the following from the 1960 examination paper:

Outline the part played by the youngest of the three "ryotoures" in "The Pardoner's Tale".

Quote three lines from Pope's *Essay on Criticism* in which the sound is made to echo the sense.

Describe the form of the following stanzas, specifying rhyme-scheme and metre. [Stanzas from two poems were provided.]<sup>14</sup>

Who was the most important non-dramatic poet between Chaucer and Milton?

Questions of this nature were very similar to those set for the Associate of Arts Examination in the 1800s and the subsequent Senior Public Examinations. The 1958 examiners found that there was a 'fairly high' correlation between the marks scored on the fact test and those obtained for the essay questions. The Board, accordingly, made this test a separate one-hour examination in 1961, and it continued in this format for the remainder of the decade. The combination of the fact test and the in-depth study of a nominated poet indicated the Syllabus Committee's intent to make increasing demands on students' knowledge and skill, and, perhaps, their wish to demonstrate these demands to the public and to their colleagues in other subject disciplines.<sup>15</sup>

At the same time, the separate three-hour Literature examination paper's format was changed so that candidates were expected to answer three essay questions, rather than the five expected previously. Poetry, novel and drama texts were now examined in more depth and many of the questions were comparative in nature in order to ensure that the syllabus was examined adequately. In 1961, the five prescribed poets were Keats, Milton, Browning, Pope and Shelley. Students were required to answer one of four questions on poetry, three of which asked students to either compare the themes and treatment of specified poems by Milton, Keats and Shelley, or the presentation of character in poems by Milton, Browning and Pope, or the differences in subject and treatment in poems by Pope, Keats and Shelley.

The syllabuses for Advanced and Ordinary level Literature were almost identical in content, but texts at the Ordinary level were examined in a 'markedly simpler' manner (1961).<sup>16</sup> The Ordinary level poetry examination questions expected candidates to recall the content of the prescribed poems and identify poems they liked, justifying their choices. In 1964, when Byron was the poet for major study and Australian poems were first introduced to the syllabus, both the Ordinary and Advanced level examinations included four questions, one of which candidates were required to answer. The Ordinary level question on Byron was 'Describe the

wanderings of Childe Harold and the effects they have on him'; that for the Advanced level was 'Discuss the 'travel-book' element in *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage*, indicating its nature and functions, and the degree of its success'. Another question on the Ordinary level paper asked students to nominate an Australian poem and a non-Australian poem they regarded as 'the best' and justify their choice. The one question on the Advanced level paper that provided candidates with a possible opportunity to respond to Australian poetry was:

Write a critical commentary on 'The Nonne Preestes Tale' OR 'Elegy Written in a Country Churchyard' OR *three* of the prescribed modern poems. Discuss the aims behind the poem (or poems), their methods, tone and degree of success. (1964)

The introduction of two levels of literature study was a response to the growing number of students who wished to study English at matriculation level, even though English Literature was not a prerequisite for entrance to university.<sup>17</sup> It also reflected, at least to some extent, Taylor's opinion in 1934 that some students were not interested in, or capable of responding to, the critical appreciation of poetry. This claim is supported by examiners' observations about candidates' performance. Some of these comments were similar to those made by Taylor in previous decades, particularly the statements about students' inability to comment intelligently on poetic techniques (1958, 1961, 1964), to address questions precisely, avoiding vague generalisations (1959, 1961), and to rely on their own ideas and judgements, rather than replicating teacher 'hand-outs' or 'critical epithets' (1959, 1961). Taylor would have supported one examiner's claim that '[h]onesty and ineptitude are far preferable to evasion or glib reproduction of "hand-out" information', and his impression that many candidates regarded poetry as 'something of a mystery (a product merely of "inspiration") [...] that is divorced from life as they know it' (1961). And had Taylor elected to examine scansion in the 1940s, he could well have written the 1964 examiner's observation that 'many candidates appear to approach scansion as though it were some esoteric mystery in which all common-sense is to be abandoned'.

In some instances, perhaps, the 'mystery' these examiners referred to was in the nature of the questions they asked, rather than in students' responses to them. Anna Grimshaw has written of the 'peculiarity' of ritual that sets it apart from other social activity (749). In this sense, some poetry questions could be seen as a form of ritual,

separated from regular classroom teaching and learning activities. The return to an emphasis on facts of literary history and the continuing expectation that students would have the ability and powers of literary judgement to write essays on subjects such as Tennyson's 'powers and limitations as a narrative and descriptive poet' indicated a belief that maintaining standards in the subject meant retaining traditional examination practices, rather than exploring equally demanding methods of testing that recognised the needs and interests of students and the ways in which poetry could address them.<sup>18</sup> Poetry appreciation at the matriculation level was becoming the territory of the privileged few who were sufficiently skilled to manage successfully the demands of the examination, demands that denied some of the important values and functions espoused for poetry and literature by both senior Education Department officers and English academics at the University.<sup>19</sup> For J.C. Horner, one of the most important of these values was 'response to literature' which, in turn, would lead to 'taste' and 'discrimination'. Horner's concern was that the syllabuses and examinations at this level caused teachers to

impose a kind of pre-fabricated system of discrimination and analysis when we know that the development of taste and appreciation is a gradual and subtle process and has no real value unless it comes from within the pupil, however much it might be influenced by the teacher. (66)

Brian Sureties's research into 'the very roots of appreciation of poetry in young people at school' led him to conclude that secondary students valued a poem's theme and 'the conquest of some reality', rather than 'technique'. He recommended that 'enjoyment and appreciation of subject and mood' should be the dominant aim of teaching poetry at this level ('Poetry in the Classroom' 63, 66, 71).<sup>20</sup> Margaret Scott, at the University's Department of English, placed high value on fostering an interest in and 'love' of poetry and literature that would promote 'an enriched appreciation of our cultural heritage'. She believed that the nature of senior secondary Literature courses and examinations was such that the 'cultivation of interest becomes an irrelevancy, and anything that is not going to pay dividends in the form of marks, a luxury of a prohibitively expensive kind' (3). Examiners, teachers and students were trapped in a process that, in another context, Graham Hough describes as 'academic paralysis' (109). At the end of the 1960s, examiners themselves acknowledged the problem, admitting publicly the artificial and counter-productive effects of current practices. The 1969 examiners of the subject wrote that

this year's experience confirms the judgement that no external examination can adequately assess the quality of students' experience of poetry at this age; and that the inevitable circumstances and procedures of the examination will seriously distort many or even most students' sense of the very nature of poetry [...]. Certainly, the demand for the elaboration and explication of real but elusive responses can only assist in fostering the most damaging and widespread misconception of poetry: that it is an activity indulged in by a few persons who, for quite mysterious motives, obstinately and unaccountably insist on translating perfectly usual experience into unlikely and recalcitrant forms, which may then be painfully translated back again – instead of its being recognised as the fullest, realist, richest, and finally most natural use of language. (1969)

The similarity between the situation developing in the examining of poetry at the senior secondary level and the traditional methods of poetry teaching in primary schools is striking. By the 1960s, both practices were formalised and so elaborately structured that teachers and students were participants in procedures that appeared to serve ends other than that of fostering an understanding and appreciation of poetry.

McAuley's assessment of the situation in 1975 was apt:

The trouble is that students now come into undergraduate English with almost no relevant knowledge or habits, except the acquired conviction that studying English is a matter of racing over the set texts, putting together a mosaic of critical 'quotes' from secondary sources, and, wherever it seems prudent, faking an insincere view of the work. When tested, they are rarely able to understand a poem and express that understanding correctly. ('Commentary' 13)<sup>21</sup>

In the primary school, the traditional literary appreciation lessons were becoming an anachronism by the end of the 1950s. Similarly, the methods of examining poetry at the senior secondary level were being questioned during the 1960s. This issue was debated for a decade before new approaches to the teaching and examining of English in 1971 changed the focus to oral and written expression, language structure and use, and contemporary forms of literature, including poetry. The traditional literature course continued as an option for interested students, but methods of examining changed to take at least some account of students' personal response to poetry.<sup>22</sup>

### **Poetry and the university**

Morris Miller wrote to Guy Howarth in April 1956 confirming that Murray Todd had accepted the Chair of English at the university, noting that he had an interest in

Australian literature and that he 'should bring the department out of its backwater bonds' (Morris Miller, UTA M9/46 (4)). Todd's short occupancy of the chair, however, did not allow him to make a significant impact on the Department's existing programs or structure.<sup>23</sup> He consolidated the fledgling fourth-year English Honours program and introduced a first-year English subject (English IA) for students not intending to continue with the study beyond that level.<sup>24</sup> Todd maintained the historical approach that had framed the study of English since 1891, and replaced Taylor's English I unit on the principles of poetry with a study of English poets in the period 1550 – 1660. William Blake and George Crabbe were the only 'new' poets added to the existing canon of poets studied during these four years, but some later poets, such as Pound, Spender, Swinburne and Edith Sitwell were no longer prescribed after 1960. There were no obvious changes in examining methods, apart from a compulsory question in English I poetry in 1957 and 1958 asking candidates to identify excerpts from a number of poems and write 'brief critical notes' on them. The Australian novel, *The Fortunes of Richard Mahony*, had featured annually in the prescribed texts from the late 1940s, but no Australian poets had been listed since Joyce Eyre's death in 1950. Todd's critical work on poets such as R.D. FitzGerald and Bernard O'Dowd suggests that he would have included Australian poets in the English courses in future years.<sup>25</sup>

McAuley assumed the role of Professor and Head of the English Department with aplomb in 1962, despite his inexperience as a university educator in English. Numbers of students and colleagues soon acknowledged his inspirational teaching and collaborative leadership style.<sup>26</sup> The English department grew in size and stature, enhanced by the launch of the journal *Australian Literary Studies* in 1963 and the appointment of three additional full-time lecturers at the end of the decade.<sup>27</sup>

The existing historical structure of the study of literature accorded with McAuley's belief that undergraduate study

should be devoted to wide reading, and especially how to read in an historical context, having regard to changes in language, genre, form, climate of ideas. ('Commentary' 13)

The existing canon of prescribed poets remained largely unchanged for the next fifteen years, except for the admission of Arthur Clough and several Australian poets

to the reading lists during the 1960s. Lectures on the Australian poets Kenneth Slessor, Judith Wright and Christopher Brennan began in 1964 and Shaw Neilson and A.D. Hope were also included in courses later in the decade.<sup>28</sup> McAuley enjoyed teaching, and conducted the majority of the lectures in the poetry units, particularly throughout the 1960s. His methods of examining these units revealed his emphasis on the significance of versification and the careful reading and understanding of poetry. Standard questions during this period are represented by these two examples from the 1964 examinations, the first for English I students, the second for English II:

Write out the following lines, and (i) scan them (ii) indicate in a second register the main speech-stresses. Use the signs recommended in your notes on metre. Comment in one or two sentences on the expressive value of the versification.

[The examples comprised four lines from Jonson's 'Hymn to Diana' and two lines from one of Donne's 'Holy Sonnets'.]

Write a critical commentary on one of the following poems. Bring out as clearly as you can the quality of the feeling; comment on the language, imagery and versification, relating them to theme and feeling. Relate the poem to the author's general attitudes and vision, calling on other of his poems that offer useful comparison. [Auden's 'Petition', Dylan Thomas's 'Do not go gentle into that good night' and Slessor's 'Beach Burial'.]

In examinations, McAuley invariably provided the text of any poems about which he sought critical commentary, including those poems that had been given close attention in tutorials or lectures. This practice was a measure of his aim to foster and examine student's ability to engage closely with texts, rather than to test skills of recall and memorisation. McAuley's more general examination questions were usually framed around attributed comments, as shown by the question on Neilson in the 1968 English III paper:

'Neilson's poetry makes its own special set of demands on the reader ... It has nothing to do with fashion or with the twentieth century, and it ignores the preoccupations of locality as much as time.' Discuss this comment by Judith Wright in relation to the various sorts of poem Neilson wrote.

McAuley wrote and spoke frequently about the teaching of literature, as well as about English teaching in general. In his address to the 1971 Annual Conference of the South Australian English Teachers Association, he lamented the fact that University English Departments were producing students who manufactured 'a

standard kind of lit-crit sentences in which there is usually a high content of plagiarism, fake, insincerity and – misreading and incomprehension’, and that universities had forced this ‘disease of pseudo-lit-crit’ on schools. McAuley then described his search for an answer to this problem:

My own search for a remedy has taken the form of a stronger and stronger emphasis on *understanding* and *interpretation* [...]. The most important part of English studies up to and including university honours classes is simply *learning to read*. (‘English Teaching and its Discontents’ 7)

McAuley’s priorities in the teaching of literature accorded with those qualities he believed made a good critic. His inaugural lecture as Professor of English concluded with remarks about the proper understanding of any work of literature:

The good critic is precisely the one who can truthfully use the phrase so often sneered at, ‘I know what I like’. For really to *know* the work, and to discover what one’s responses *genuinely* are, are two difficult things: they are not the beginning, they are the crown of our endeavour [...]. But before we try to fix the degrees and directions of our genuine likes and dislikes and our reasons for them, let us be sure we have seen the works in question as nearly as possible in their full reality. This is why scholarship is an essential part of humanism. (‘Edmund Spenser and George Eliot’ 84)

On another occasion, McAuley praised Helen Gardner’s *The Business of Criticism*, noting in particular her claim that good criticism is the power to respond to a good poem and be able to ‘elucidate its significance, beauty and meaning in terms which are valid for other readers’. McAuley affirmed that ‘the great task of criticism [is] the labour of love’, not of ‘scorn and censure’:

To kindle appreciation of what is good is in the long run a better way to strengthen public discrimination than to scourge what seems bad. This does not imply a flabby complacency that levels down everything [...]. Let us discriminate, but let us attend most to the cultivation of what is good, not being over-officious to speed the rest down its short path to oblivion. Concerning wisdom in this field the remark made by Quintilian, which Helen Gardner quotes, is worth remembering: “For the very true beginning of her [i.e. wisdom] is the desire of discipline and the care of discipline is love.” (‘The Critic’s Task’ 156)

McAuley’s reference to cultivation with its associated meanings of nurture, care and discipline can be compared to the use Janney, Lancaster and other commentators made of the term over a hundred years earlier. Although their perspectives differed, both the nineteenth-century writers and McAuley aimed to cultivate an appreciation



of the 'good', while recognising the existence of the 'bad'. Both in different ways and for different reasons acknowledged that the 'good' could only be achieved through structured and sustained effort. For McAuley, images of cultivation conveyed a sense of the discipline required for both the reading and teaching of poetry. By contrast, images of growth that were used to describe creative expression activities in schools in the late 1960s represented for McAuley a form of self-indulgence that subordinated 'literary – and also scholastic – values to other ends such as self-expression, self-discovery, "adventures in ...", all summed up in the ruling slogan "Growth through English"' ('Poets Anonymous' 13). McAuley, therefore, attacked educational policies and practices he saw as 'hostile to intellectual excellence', and challenged those, for example, who believed it 'wrong, reactionary, and undesirable' to undertake formal analysis of verse, particularly those teachers whose belief in 'creative spontaneity', 'free expression' and 'organic form' led them to resist the practice ('Blueprint for Ockers' 3, 'The Dynamics of Verse' 51).

In the 1970s, McAuley's exchange of views with David Mallick, lecturer in the University's Faculty of Education, illustrated tensions confronting teachers between traditional methods of disciplined reading and study of literature and those that appeared to free the learning process from content-driven curricula and normative measurement. In an article in the *University of Tasmania News*, McAuley was quoted as claiming that the word 'creative' had 'bedevilled our culture for 150 years or more [and] is now bedevilling the schools in the form of so-called creative writing':

Children are encouraged to take little ego-trips in bad prose dribbled over the page so that it can be called a poem [...]. Unfortunately by confusing this kind of classroom kitsch with genuine literature the powers of literary discrimination which schools should be developing are retarded. ('Academics Honoured' 1)

McAuley defined the 'basics of English' as teaching students to read, write and speak well and introducing them to 'literature in the wide sense including some of the best fiction and poetry in the language'. He claimed that society was 'being so conditioned by the trendy talk of educationists (by which I mean the non-teaching breed of educational apparatchiks and ideologues)' that teaching programs he supported were labelled as 'reactionary', 'irrelevant' and 'formalistic'. McAuley believed that a good basic course in English, as he defined it, could succeed with the

great bulk of students, if teachers forgot the 'nonsense' they learnt in teacher-training courses, and schools were freed from 'anti-intellectual deviations' and 'slogans' and, instead, taught the basics of English 'preferably with rational connection and under the discipline of knowledge' (1).

In the next edition of the *News*, Mallick replied to what he described as McAuley's '[p]olemical statement' and 'outburst'. He outlined some of the contemporary English teaching practices espoused by writers, such as John Dixon, Harold Rosen and David Holbrook, that encouraged students 'to confidently explore concepts and ideas in their own personal and expressive language' ('English Teaching: A Reply' 2). Mallick acknowledged that he and many teachers were aware of the tensions between, for example, emphasising 'the creative, the imaginative and the personal' and the 'more formal and mechanical parts of the language', or between 'letting the children follow their own responses to the literature' and feeling that much of this 'is irrelevant, undisciplined, unstructured' (3). He referred to the current 'tentative and intelligent thinking about English teaching' and the problems 'being responsibly raised and rigorously looked at' in order to achieve 'stronger and more sensitive' work in classrooms (2, 3).

In a subsequent note, McAuley wrote that his initial 'off the cuff' remarks had been prompted by reading the first *Report* of the Australian School Commission, and his belief that its educational proposals were governed by a 'political ideology' which threatened 'the basic traditional subjects', disadvantaged 'the high-flying student' with its emphasis on equal outcomes for all students, and imposed a 'non-scholastic aim' on schools by helping children 'to find their identity as social beings' ('Further comments' 2). McAuley equated this approach to Dixon's in *Growth Through English*, and his opposition to it was unequivocal:

Teaching real subjects is a difficult but limited and intelligible aim which one might without qualms entrust to a teacher of one's children. Teaching a child 'to be', or taking charge of its 'growth' is a queer unlimited aim which one might well have qualms about offering as a mandate to anyone.  
(2)

The different points of view expressed by McAuley and Mallick illustrated the distinctive nature of two discourses on English teaching. Implicit in McAuley's

references to 'basic traditional subjects', 'scholastic' values, the 'best poetry' and the 'discipline of knowledge' were teaching practices that regulated and controlled the learning process and preserved traditional values and standards by methods similar to those 'technologies of control' described by Hunter. On the other hand, Mallick's references to 'expressive language', 'personal writing', 'sensitivity' and 'the creative, the imaginative and the personal' implied a rejection of traditional methods that regulated teaching content and enforced standards, in favour of learning processes based on individual developmental needs, and personal feelings and interests. These processes contained elements of the Romantic ideologies explored by Reid.

The McAuley-Mallick debate was a culmination of the tensions between the two discourses on English teaching that surfaced in Tasmania in the 1950s. In subsequent decades, the teaching of poetry in primary and junior secondary classes reflected the Romantic ideologies and classroom methods that Mallick supported. Although poetry teaching practices at the senior secondary and university levels appeared to be less influenced by such concepts, the significance of emerging linguistic and literary theories and the application of 'other academic frames of reference [such as] sociology and politics [...] to English studies' prompted changes in poetry's value and function (Clunies Ross 9). Some commentators expressed concern about these changes, noting that poetry was no longer studied as 'the jewel in the crown of the verbal arts' (Andrews 62). Poetry was regarded as a textual resource to support personal or creative writing courses, or to illustrate thematic modules exploring 'questions of gender, ethnicity, national identity, politics and class'; and selected poems were scrutinized as models or dissected for evidence to meet these needs (Childs ix). These approaches challenged, but did not supplant, teaching that focussed on the appreciation of poetry as literature, as evidenced in some Tasmanian contemporary secondary and university courses in English.<sup>29</sup> The new approaches were sufficiently ensconced in literary studies, however, to support concerns expressed by some commentators that the humanities were being corrupted by social agendas, or that 'the aesthetic tradition' was being challenged by an increasing 'instrumental approach to literature'.<sup>30</sup> In these contexts, the traditional canons of poets and poems, preserved on the basis of literary or moral merit, declined in significance.

Within Tasmania, the canon of poets and poems taught in schools was challenged in the late 1960s by Ian Hill's article 'What's Wrong with Tasmanian Poetry?' Hill welcomed the addition of Australian poets to school and university courses of study during the previous decade, but regretted that many children and adults were being 'left in widespread ignorance' of Tasmanian poets such as Christopher Koch, Vivian Smith, Miriam Stone, Clive Sansom, Gwen Harwood, James McAuley, Syd Harrex and Norma Davis. He believed that children would be 'more receptive to poetry with a local flavour, about places and events they know well', and that the lack of any mention of Tasmanian poetry in an English syllabus for Tasmanian schools was 'a serious omission'.

We should grasp the opportunity to present to our pupils poetry that is peculiarly Tasmanian – by Tasmanian poets or about Tasmania. I am not suggesting that we should try to build up false impressions about a great literary tradition in our State, but simply that our pupils should realise that there is poetry written here, that much of it is about our island State and, most important, that much of it is good poetry. (7)

Hill claimed that Tasmanian poetry with its 'local references would add a vitality, a freshness, a deeper interest and a deeper sense of involvement for the reader, particularly for the weaker pupils and those who do not take kindly to poetry' (8), and that reading poets' responses to settings and subjects known personally to children could encourage their own creative writing. He supported his claim by examining briefly several poems on Tasmanian subjects, suggesting that children's 'visual impression and historical knowledge' would increase the impact of the poignant theme of Nell Old's 'Port Arthur', that Syd Harrex's somewhat 'abstract' and 'ethical comment' about the injustice of convict labour in his poem 'Longford Churchyard, Tasmania' would be more accessible to children familiar with the setting (8), and that their personal experience of the Hobart airport would make more immediate Horner's depiction of two people's feelings of minuteness and inconsequence on the edge of the windy tarmac (10).

Hill noted the need for an anthology of Tasmanian poetry, a need subsequently addressed by Margaret Scott and Vivian Smith's *Effects of Light: The Poetry of Tasmania* in 1985 and, more recently, by *River of Verse: A Tasmanian Journey 1800-2004*, edited by Helen Gee.<sup>31</sup> *Effects of Light* was one of the poetry texts

prescribed for Matriculation English Literature in 1987 and, since 2000, has been a recommended text for the University's School of English, Journalism and European Languages unit, 'The Literature of Tasmania'. Hill aimed to broaden and extend the traditional canon of poetry taught in Tasmanian institutions of learning, but within the context of those values and functions of poetry that had ensured poetry's significant status within English studies since the beginning of the century.

In more recent years, some commentators have expressed concerns about possible threats to poetry's status and significance within education. Perhaps the clearest indication of a possible threat to poetry's traditional rôle in school and university learning is a change in the imagery governments and departments of education use to describe their priorities in education. Throughout the hundred years examined in this study, organic images of cultivation and growth conveyed poetry's formative power to enhance students' lives. At the beginning of the twenty-first century, Mary Warnock suggested, however, that contemporary educational imagery had 'switched dramatically from the horticultural to that of the factory floor' (193). And more recently, Derek Attridge identified the 'shift to an increasingly instrumental approach to literature [that is] part of a more general, globally experienced increase in the weight given to the values of the market-place, to the success ethic, to productivity as a measure of worth' (9). Within Australia, David Homer has commented on the National Curriculum for English Statements and Profiles, whose discourse of 'legalism and regulation [...] constructs the antithesis of the "growth" approach to English', and augurs a 'process of change and recolonisation of education which will infest the work of students and teachers for the next several years, in the names of National Renewal and Economic Prosperity' (4, 11, 10).<sup>32</sup>

At some levels of education in Tasmania, there are signs that similar images of productivity, outcomes and quality assurance are dominating educational discourse. The Education Department's policy documents on Tasmanian Literacy Outcomes (TLOs) and Essential Learning Outcomes (ELOs), for example, could appear to focus unduly on basic 'competencies' and the 'quantifiable'. At one level of educational accountability, this approach may be acceptable. If, however, it becomes a form of managerialism that constrains teachers and restricts classroom methodologies in ways similar to some of the earlier inspection and examination

strategies examined in this study, or if it sets aside 'concepts of a cultural or ethical nature' in learning programs, then Clive Bloom's fear that the humanities subjects could become 'outdated systems which will function as living archeological sites [...] for the indulgence of nostalgia' may be realised (142).

Within this context, my examination of the changing values and functions of poetry in Tasmanian institutions of learning over a period of one hundred years provides a note of caution for today's educational leaders. The results of some of the policies and teaching practices I have considered confirm Gioia's claim that educational institutions are capable of codifying canons of poetry and the precepts and practice of their teaching so that they become stale 'conventions [...] that imprison poetry in an intellectual ghetto' (106). By defining these canons and methods of teaching solely on the basis of contemporary social, political and educational beliefs, the guardians of Bernstein's 'official verse culture' may diminish poetry's potential value and function in ways similar to Plato's 'watchdogs' who supervised the selection and rejection of material for learning in his Republic (110, 115). Plato's belief that the 'only poetry that should be allowed in a state is hymns to the gods and paeans in praise of good men [because] once you go beyond that and admit the sweet lyric or epic muse, pleasure and pain become your rulers instead of law and the principles commonly accepted as best' (384) is reflected in some of the nineteenth-century beliefs which limited the nature of poetry read in Tasmanian schools. The British and Foreign School Society teacher and author, Henry Dunn, believed in poetry's power to promulgate religious and moral beliefs, quoting from Wordsworth's *The Excursion* to support the importance of students being taught the 'rudiments of letters and 'moral and religious truth'. At the same time, however, he insisted that poetry's imaginative power and the faculty of imagination should be regulated carefully. He warned teachers of the 'importance of habitually controlling the immediate exercise of this imperious faculty', claiming that it 'must be subjected to severe and constant discipline if you would attain to any high degree, either of intellectual or moral excellence' (198, 199).

In recent decades, other imperatives and forms of control have impacted on the nature of the canons of poetry taught and the methods of their teaching. Martin Duwell believes that one of these is a continuous 'shying away from literature itself

[...] to the study of something else: language, the nature of criticism, culture, the folk, literary history, discourse, society', and that these wider 'generalisations' or 'fabrications' impede any 'full appreciation' of the poetry itself ('Poetry and Universities' 4). Hollander claims that institutions are 'spawning' 'false versions' of poetry, if they adopt approaches such as these (6). His assessment of the situation in America at the end of the twentieth century is that 'there is an absence of poetry in many cultural places where it used to be in evidence':

University curricula in literature are increasingly uneasy about it. School children are no longer required to commit poems and passages of verse to memory. College students are no long trained to read it closely as a first step to more extensive and elaborate construing of literary and non-literary texts. University teachers-in-training in most graduate programs feel more and more that the study of poetry per se is marginal, and when poetic texts are studied, they are, like novels and plays, little blobs of condensed contextualization. For many schoolteachers and bureaucrats and poetasters outside the academy, poems are little blobs of sentiment. Criticism in the first instance consists largely now of adducing the manifest or latent evidence, in the poem, of the repressive nature of the society in which it was written. In the second, it consists too often of glossing it, in the psychobabble that has largely replaced the mildly religious popular discourse of an earlier time. (9)

Implied in Hollander's critique is the need for specified canons of poetry and changes in the methods of their teaching. Martin Duwell is explicit about both these matters. He believes that 'our lack of a canonical literature' could explain why 'at least in Queensland, few students have any genuine experience of poetry at all at school' and that 'a canon gives children a basic grounding in poetry, while later providing undergraduate and early postgraduate students something tangible to bite against'. He considers, as did James McAuley, that this canon should contain an 'historical perspective' ('Unsung poetry'). Duwell's teaching focusses on the text of the poem itself – 'a kind of existential experience of the poem' – that is not an interpretation of the poem in the reader's terms, but an experience of 'utter otherness' ('Poetry and Universities' 8). At the primary school level, A.N. Wilson expects a canon of poems to be more than 'wacky "humour"' presented in 'primary colours':

There is no point in encouraging the "kids" to love poetry if all that you are offering is a versified version of their already garish kiddy-culture. Yes, make them laugh. But they should also be shocked by the thrill of heroism, death, love, nature – these are the stuff of all great literature (5).

He identifies particular poems that should be taught at this elementary stage in order to remain part of children's 'imaginative lives forever' and also prepare them for the 'greater poetry' of poets such as Homer (5). David Malouf regrets the passing of 'the glory days when primary school children recited by heart poetry that etched its way into their minds, instilling a sense of the lyric'. He believes that the lyric

has largely been sidelined [...] because it is difficult to teach and so what tends to be taught is what can be taught. That means the kind of poetry that has largely become fashionable in the last hundred years is poetry about situations, about the dramatisation of those situations and the poet's voice. (Dawson 1, 2)

An extension of this study would examine how these and similar issues apply to the teaching of poetry in Tasmanian institutions of learning at the beginning of the twenty-first century. This investigation would consider the range and nature of the poetry taught, what this reveals about poetry's status within current social, political and educational orthodoxies, and the extent to which poetry serves to confirm and challenge them. An important facet of the study would be to test claims made by some writers about poetry's ability to 'resist incorporation into the degraded language of public discourse' (Shetley 191) and to serve as an 'antidote to ideologies' (Hollander 4). Claims such as these reflect those values of poetry as an educative and cultural force affirmed by Hayhoe and Parker:

Poetry exists in the world beyond the school and therefore is part of our proper business inside it. It is an aspect of the curriculum which provides the opportunity and obligation to feel as well as think, to recognise the talent of an individual as well as the society in which he or she lived or lives. It is a means of exploring beyond the logical and the immediately, practically 'Relevant' [...]. Given the proper climate, poetry gives shape to and celebrates existence; it also challenges and questions. (4)

Were such a study to conclude that the 'climate' is not conducive to poetry and that the gates of official verse culture are not open to poets whose discourses reflect these values, perhaps there is hope, as Hollander's image suggests, that these poets could walk around the 'periphery of the town' and discover 'new gates' through which to enter the classroom and academy (5).



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## Notes

<sup>1</sup> Clive Sansom was appointed Supervisor of Speech Education in 1950, and James C. Horner Supervisor of English in 1965.

<sup>2</sup> *Curriculum for Primary Schools: English* 1950: 13. Further references to this document appear in the text, in parenthesis. In the first instance, the Department had difficulty identifying and making available this 'approved series of readers'. The *Tasmanian Readers* continued in use for some classes until graded series of readers, such as *The Wide Range Readers* and *Reading On*, became available later in the decade.

<sup>3</sup> *Curriculum for Primary Schools: English* 1963: 18-19. Further references to this document appear in the text, in parenthesis.

<sup>4</sup> Sansom's texts were used frequently in classrooms in the 1950s and 60s, particularly *Reading Aloud*, *Choral Speaking*, *By Word of Mouth* and *The Poet Speaks: an anthology for choral speaking*.

<sup>5</sup> William Herbert Perkins was appointed lecturer in the University's Faculty of Education in 1948. Before then he taught in Tasmanian high schools for twelve years and served for five years in the Australian Army Education Service during the Second World War. His major published work was on film appreciation, *Learning the Liveliest Art* (1968).

<sup>6</sup> 'The Foundations of Literary Appreciation in the Primary School Part 1', 15. Further references to this document appear in the text, in parenthesis.

<sup>7</sup> Perkins quotes from several articles in early issues of the *Journal*. See pages 23 and 49 of Part 1 and page 90 of Part 2 of 'Literary Appreciation in the Primary School'.

<sup>8</sup> Extracts from Chubb's *The Teaching of English* are quoted on pages 16, 19 and 20 of 'Literary Appreciation in the Primary School Part 1'.

<sup>9</sup> This claim is based on my personal experiences as a student teacher in 1955. One of my colleagues that year motivated student response to Keats's 'Ode to Autumn' by setting fire to dried autumn leaves in a kerosene tin in the classroom. He won high praise from Perkins for conducting an inspiring lesson. The school Principal responded differently.

<sup>10</sup> See Todd's *Politics and the Poet: A Study of Wordsworth* (1957).

<sup>11</sup> Todd also appointed Laurie Hergenhan as Lecturer in 1960. Hergenhan participated to some extent in School Board English Syllabus deliberations, but made a significant contribution to the University's English Department, becoming foundation editor of *Australian Literary Studies* in 1963.

<sup>12</sup> McAuley was Patron of the Tasmanian Association for the Teaching of English from 1967 until his death. He chaired the Australian UNESCO Seminar on the Teaching of English in Sydney in 1972 and represented Australia at the conference of the British National Association of Teachers of English at Birmingham in 1973.

<sup>13</sup> This information and that which follows is drawn from the Schools Board *Matriculation Manual* for the relevant years.

<sup>14</sup> This style of question became more popular due to McAuley's influence. Accordingly, teachers welcomed his *A Primer of English Versification* when it was published in 1966.

<sup>15</sup> I base this supposition on my observation of similar concerns when I was a member of the English Syllabus Committee in the 1970s.

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<sup>16</sup> The close similarity of the content of the two levels made it possible to teach the two groups of students in the same class.

<sup>17</sup> As noted in chapter 4, a pass in English Expression at fourth-year high school was a prerequisite for entry to the University.

<sup>18</sup> The question on Tennyson is from the 1958 examination paper.

<sup>19</sup> During this period, two research students at the University (Brian Sureties and Andries Onsman) completed higher degrees on the teaching of poetry in high schools in which they addressed similar issues.

<sup>20</sup> Sureties attributes the phrase 'the conquest of some reality' to J. Middleton Murray.

<sup>21</sup> See McAuley's 'spoof' answers to two Matriculation literature questions in 'Candidate 1984, or the English Answer Guide'.

<sup>22</sup> Questions on an 'unseen' poem were introduced to this examination in the late 1980s. By the last decade of the century, most Higher School Certificate students chose English Studies rather than English Literature. In 1990, for example, only 25% of all students enrolled for English subjects studied English Literature (*HME*: 'English Literature Report No 15', 1). Examiners suggested that reasons for this low participation were that English studies students could 'avoid Shakespeare and poetry', and that the subject matter of the Literature course and the skills required to cope with it were 'becoming much less valued by students (and educators?)' (*HME*: 'Report No. 14', 1).

<sup>23</sup> Todd's role as president of the University Staff Association during the period following the Orr case, when the Australian and New Zealand philosophers had placed a ban on the Tasmanian Chair of Philosophy, would have demanded much of his time (Davis 154).

<sup>24</sup> The fourth-year Honours program had been introduced in 1956.

<sup>25</sup> In his previous position at the Australian National University, Todd presented two Commonwealth Literary Fund lectures on the Australian poets R.D. FitzGerald and Bernard O'Dowd. Todd subsequently published articles on these two poets.

<sup>26</sup> Salleh Ben Joned and Peter Pierce have both written tributes to McAuley's gifts as a teacher. Other students at the time, such as Vicki Raymond and Peter Conrad, have spoken with me about McAuley's stimulating lectures and tutorials, and his support for students and their endeavours. Margaret Scott, a member of the English staff in the 70s, has also spoken of McAuley's democratic and consultative leadership of the English Department.

<sup>27</sup> Theodora Goodwin was appointed Staff Tutor in 1963, and Jessie Williams and John Wall Lecturers in 1970. Margaret Boddy and John Winter were appointed as Tutor and Lecturer respectively in 1971.

<sup>28</sup> McAuley subsequently expanded his lectures on some of these poets into critical articles, for example 'An Imprint of Slessor' and 'Shaw Neilson's poetry'.

<sup>29</sup> Recent Tasmanian Senior Secondary and University English courses and examinations support this claim. The prescribed poets for Higher School Certificate English Literature in 2001 were William Wordsworth, Margaret Scott, Gwen Harwood, D.H. Lawrence, Philip Larkin and Robert Gray. The examination paper consisted of three questions, one expecting students to examine the work on a poet or a prescribed novel or play to a theme, one seeking a critical commentary on an unseen poem showing the relationship 'between form and content', and a specific question on either a prescribed novel, play or poet. Students were also expected to undertake an independent literary project during the year. One of the aims of the University English Department's first year course in 2002 was to extend 'students' skills of close reading, critical thinking and textual analysis across a range of genres' including poetry. Poets featured in lectures and tutorials were Tim Thorne, Margaret Scott,

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Gwen Harwood, Adrienn Eberhard, John Kinsella, Les Murray, Gig Ryan, John Tranter, Joanne Burns, Seamus Heaney, John Ashberry, E.K. Brathwaite, Sylvia Plath, Paul Violi and Kenneth Koch.

<sup>30</sup> See John M. Ellis's *Literature Lost: Social Agendas and the Corruption of the Humanities*, and Derek Attridge's *The Singularity of Literature*.

<sup>31</sup> Of the poets mentioned by Hill in his article 'What's Wrong with Tasmanian Poetry?', only Miriam Stone is not represented in either *Effects of Light* or *River of Verse*.

<sup>32</sup> Bethan Marshall examines the concept of 'National Renewal' as it applied to debates about the National Curriculum for English in England during the 1990s.

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